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ABSTRACT

Research on school-based curriculum decision-making (SBCD) in Australia involved a national survey of 586 educators in 98 secondary schools and an ethnographic study of a Sydney (Australia) high school. The results are presented in 9 chapters and 67 tables. The study focused on what decisions are made in Australian schools about years 7-10 curricula, who makes the decisions and how they are made, and what factors influence the decision-making. An introductory chapter gives the study's background, while chapter 2 reviews the literature on SBCD and curriculum theory and decision-making. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology--including the survey's sampling methods, populations (principals, department heads, and teachers), variables, and statistical analyses--and discusses the ethnographic methods used. Chapters 4-7 present the survey and ethnographic results, covering (1) curriculum decisions made, involving school objectives, teaching methods, evaluations, curriculum changes, and students' perceptions; (2) decision-making participants and processes; (3) internal and external factors influencing decision-making; and (4) respondent perceptions on curricula, autonomy, and ideals. The "consultancy" or feedback provided to the high school examined in the ethnographic study is described in chapter 8. Chapter 9 summarizes the research project's findings and recommendations. (RW)

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CURRICULUM ACTION PROJECT

A REPORT OF CURRICULUM DECISION–MAKING IN AUSTRALIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

David Cohen & Marelle Harrison

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

Since the early 1960's, attempts have been initiated by Australian educators to broaden the involvement of people in educational decision-making in Australian states and territories. These attempts may be perceived partly as a response to the growth stresses in school systems which had become large administrative units. In 1973, investigating the needs of Australian schools, the Karmel Committee designated one of its principal values as the "devolution of responsibility".

> The Committee favours less rather than more centralised control over the operation of schools. Responsibility should be devolved as far as possible upon the people involved in the actual task of schooling, in consultation with the parents of the pupils whom they teach and, at senior levels, with the students themselves. Its belief in this grass-roots approach to the control of the schools reflects a conviction that responsibility will be most effectively discharged where the people entrusted with making decisions are also the people responsible for carrying them out, with an obligation to justify them, and in a position to profit from their experience.
>
> (Schools in Australia, 1973:10)

This may have reflected a changing philosophy among some educational leaders towards increased professionalisation and democratisation. These latter forces have purportedly influenced moves towards increased levels of involvement in educational decision-making.

Responding to these pressures - or at least perceived pressures - for increased staff and community involvement in educational decision-making, potential participants sought more help with the development of strategies for effective participation. In particular, how could they be assisted to participate in curriculum development? Many requests were received by the Curriculum Studies staff at Macquarie University to provide assistance to schools for improving their curricula and their strategies for developing, implementing and evaluating these curricula.

Partly in response to these growing demands for help, it was decided to seek more evidence about the current status of curriculum decision-making in Australian schools. The initial focus of the resulting research interest at Macquarie University was upon schools at primary level rather than secondary level, for two main reasons:

(1) the absence of external examinations at primary school level left schools more free to exercise curriculum autonomy without the need to conform to any externally-imposed end-of-program set of requirements;

(2) more requests for assistance were being received from primary than from secondary schools.

Thus, it was foreshadowed in the initial Macquarie University proposal entitled "Curriculum Decision-Making: Autonomy for Schools" submitted to the Education Research and Development Committee (ERDC) in April 1976 that:

"The proposed research (aimed) to investigate the following problems:

1. To what extent has curriculum decision-making autonomy been accepted by teachers in Australian primary schools?
    1.1 Whom do teachers perceive as the persons who actually make decisions about curriculum for primary schools?
    1.2 To what extent do teachers desire to participate in decision-making about curriculum for their schools?
    1.3 To what extent do teachers believe they have the necessary competencies to participate in curriculum decision-making for their schools?

2. By what strategies can teachers be assisted to participate confidently in curriculum decision-making for their schools?
    2.1 What are some crucial factors (if any) which relate to participation by teachers in curriculum decision-making at the school level?
    2.2 What are the crucial competencies involved in curriculum decision-making for schools?
    2.3 What are some strategies which can be used to assist in the development of these competencies in teachers?"

It was anticipated that "Aim 1" would be undertaken in 1977-78, and "Aim 2" would be pursued in 1979-80.

Also during 1976, both the Director and the Council of the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) had expressed an interest in generating research and development activities concerning the processes of curriculum decision-making (CDC Triennial Report). Concurrently, a team of researchers from the University of Queensland (led by Professor Glen Evans) had submitted a proposal to the Education Research and Development Committee (ERDC) in Canberra.

Attempts were made by ERDC to coordinate the separate proposals from Macquarie University and the University of Queensland, into one study (see Appendix A), but differing philosophies and geographical separation precluded this possibility. Two separate studies were thus mounted, each designated as "Curriculum Action Project". A positive outcome of the attempts at coordination was that each team agreed to focus on Years 7-10 throughout Australian secondary schools. The selection of Years 7-10 in secondary schools reflected the stated priority interests of the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC Triennial Report (1977-79)) and also of the Directors-General of Education.

2. METHODOLOGIES

It was decided to collect data about school-based curriculum decision-making (SBCD) using two differing and complementary methods, namely:

(a) a survey by means of a questionnaire, and

(b) an ethnographic study of one or more schools in Sydney (see page 5 for the definition of ethnography as adopted in this study).

A survey was included as a source of Australia-wide data which could be quickly gathered by means of mailed questionnaires.

The ethnographic study was included in the investigation as a source of data which could be used

(i) to investigate the validity of questionnaire responses, essentially providing reports of respondents' perceptions of particular phenomena or situations;

(ii) to provide a reservoir of data to illustrate within a specific context the questionnaire results;

(iii) to illustrate SBCD from an observational perspective;

(iv) to facilitate the development of methodologies for obtaining empirical evidence about SBCD in its natural setting.

A more detailed description of each of these methodologies is provided in Chapter 111.

3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The revised aims of the Macquarie-based Curriculum Action Project were to seek answers to the questions:

(a) what decisions are being made about Years 7-10 curricula within Australian schools?

(b) how are these decisions being made?

(c) what factors influence decision-making?

These questions were focussed on SBCD.

Quite deliberately, no firm hypotheses were specified prior to the commencement of the study. Rather, it was the intention to generate hypotheses from the data as it emerged. However, there was some interest in exploring parameters related to such factors as

- respondents, according to position in the school (i.e., principals, department heads, and teachers);
- interstate differences; and
- schools according to size, location, type and school climate.

4. DEFINITIONS ADOPTED FOR THE CURRICULUM ACTION PROJECT

For purposes of the present study, a number of terms were defined in order to achieve consistency of usage. The following definitions were adopted:

(a) Curriculum

On the one hand, curriculum as intention comprises a progressively-modifiable plan of areas of learning and growth for an individual or group of learners, focussed upon an educational centre, incorporating a set of objectives, a set of learning experiences and suggestions for their organisation and techniques for evaluation of learning outcomes.

On the other hand, curriculum as reality is what actually happens to the person or persons, arising from a complex network of interactions between people, responding to a diverse array of influences, explicit and implicit, human and physical.

Note: (1) An "educational centre" may be a school, community centre, "Open University", school of nursing, etc.

(2) An "area of learning" may be defined in terms of subject area, grade or developmental level, interdisciplinary theme, a specific school or geographic region etc.

(3) "Learning experiences" mean what is to be learned and how it is to be learned. "Organisation" is interpreted as the scope, sequence and interrelationships between learning experiences.

(Cohen, Deer, Harrison and Josephsen, 1978)

(b) Decision-making

Decision-making is the process of making a choice for action, sometimes on the basis of choosing between alternatives.

(c) School-based Curriculum Decision-making

School-based curriculum decision-making (SBCD) is the participation of some or all of the staff of a school (sometimes involving parents and/or students) in decisions about the curriculum of that school.

(d) Ethnography

Ethnographic methodology has been defined as

> a process in which the observer's presence in a social situation is maintained for the purpose of scientific investigation. The observer is in a face-to-face relationship with the observed, and by participating with them in their natural life setting, he gathers data. Thus, the observer is part of the context being observed, and he both modifies and is influenced by this context (Schwartz and Schwartz, 1955:343).

(e) Participant-observation

Participant-observation

> involves some amount of genuinely social interaction in the field with the subjects of the study, some direct observation of relevant events, some formal and a great deal of informal interviewing, some systematic counting, some collection of documents and artefacts, and open-endedness in the direction the study takes (McCall and Simmons, 1969:1).

5. SOME ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING CAP

The intention of CAP was to provide a descriptive study of the current status of curriculum decision-making, via the strategies of survey and ethnography.

Assumptions underlying the study included the following:

- the data gathered from items on questionnaires administered to a national stratified random sample would provide reliable and valid evidence about current curriculum decision-making processes in Australian secondary schools;
- the research team would be perceived as and become "part of the culture" of the school being studied, so as to be able to reflect the ethnography of the school;
- the values held by members of the research team would not negate the acceptability of their roles and findings;
- shared perceptions concerning the meanings of the terminology used in the research, including the meanings of "curriculum", "decisions" and "decision-making";
- teacher perceptions of curriculum decision-making are not unduly constrained or shaped by their perceptions of what is possible in "a school" in Australian society as it exists today;
- the ethnographic study would help to map the research area more clearly by illuminating the issues and concerns of a school community;
- strategies and findings from both the national survey and ethnographic study would provide useful guidelines for future curriculum research and development activities.
- self reports by respondents of their perceptions of events and people, which were inevitably influenced by the insights and values of respondents, constitute valid data;
- as the CAP data were related specifically to curriculum decision-making (formal or informal), and data was not specifically sought concerning other aspects of classroom activities, the results cannot be generalised;
- as the CAP survey data reported were based upon an analysis of 98 cases, or about 7% of the total sample of Australian secondary schools it cannot be assumed that the findings are:
  - (a) generalisable to any other secondary schools;
  - (b) generalisable to any Year levels other than Years 7-10 (for example, to primary schools).

6. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Devolution of responsibility for curriculum decision-making had become policy in each state and territory in Australia (see Appendix However, there had been few studies which could provide any evidence concerning the processes involved in decision-making in schools. Thus, SBCD remained as a largely unmapped field. Paradoxically, this was at a time when the expectations of educational administrators were that school staffs would be involved in implementing locally-devised curricula.

Likewise, methodologies for the study of SBCD had not been developed, at least in the Australian context.

The need for a study to map some of the parameters and to generate alternative strategies appeared to be a prerequisite for more effective implementation of school-based curriculum decision-making. The joint interest of the Education Research and Development Committee, the Curriculum Development Centre, the Australian Education Council (representing Ministers and Directors-General of Education), and the Schools Commission, lent strong additional support to the research priorities of the Curriculum Action Project.

The Curriculum Action Project was therefore seen as an opportunity to refine the parameters, questions and issues concerning SBCD, and to provide some data concerning existing SBCD practices in the Australian states and territories.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature reviews concerning curriculum reveal a lack of consensus concerning meanings and perceptions of terms, generalisations, and descriptive models. Curriculum theory is not well developed. Even some long-accepted theoretical statements are the subject of debate and criticism. Few such statements have been developed or evaluated from an empirical base.

Meanwhile, school staffs are being urged to use a range of models and differing processes in implementing SBCD. To what extent could their practices be guided by research evidence related to SBCD or by a review of alternatives offered within the literature? In devising approaches for the Curriculum Action Project, it seemed wise to develop a framework for planning and evaluation on the basis of any existing theories and models to explain curriculum practices in schools. In this Chapter, relevant literature concerning school-based curriculum decision-making is reviewed. Aspects of literature reviewed include curriculum theories and models, decision-making theory, the school as an organisational context, school based curriculum decision-making, curriculum consultancy, and ethnographic methodology. These areas are interrelated within the research undertaken in the Curriculum Action Project.

1. CURRICULUM THEORIES AND MODELS

In order that the Curriculum Action Project might generate some acceptable theoretical statements, it was important first to establish the criteria for evaluating the status of such statements. What, for example, might be accepted as criteria for attributing the status of "theory" to statements?

A theory has been defined as

> a deductively connected set of laws.... In a theory, all statements, both explained and explaining, are generalisations ... a theory not only explains and predicts, it also describes, for each single statement of the theory states how something is lawfully connected with something else (Brodbeck, 1963:68-9).

Curriculum theorists have been urged to perform certain activities in theorising, including

- formulation of definitions,
- classification of relevant information into homogeneous categories,
- utilisation of inductive and deductive processes,
- making inferences and predictions, and testing them in the crucible of research,
- development of models, and
- formation of sub-theory (see Beauchamp, 1975:20).

Many curriculum writers have commented on the inadequacy of curriculum theory (see for example Schwab, 1970; Bassett, 1973; Kerr, 1973; Bullivant, 1974; Beauchamp, 1975:6; Goodlad, 1975b; Reid, 1975; Skilbeck, 1975:7; Stenhouse, 1975:70; Huebner, 1976; Kliebard, 1977; Pinar, 1977:10; 1978:5-12; Tyler, 1977). Formulation of definitions of curriculum, one of the earlier stages in curriculum theorising, has proceeded over the years, Many and varied definitions have been propounded; for example,curriculum as a course of study, as a plan for learning, or as both intentions for and operationalisation of learning situations (intentions and reality) (see for example,Taba, 1962; Musgrave, 1974; Taylor et al., 1974; Cohen et al., 1978). Curriculum definitions have been linked with attempts to classify and categorise the phenomena of curriculum.

The definition proposed by Tyler (1949) began by seeking answers to the following four basic questions:

- what are the educational purposes of the school?
- what subject matter should be taught?
- what methods and organization should be employed?
- how can the results be appraised?

Refinements of these questions have resulted in the identification of four curriculum components, namely

- objectives;
- learning experiences;
- organisation of learning experiences;
- evaluation of learning outcomes (see for example Taba, 1962; Cohen, 1974:15; Zahorik, 1975:134; Wheeler, 1974:52-55; Cohen et al, 1978).

(a) Curriculum Models

Generalisations also have been developed in attempting to explain relationships between components of a curriculum. One of these generalisations has been interpreted as suggesting that curriculum development proceeded in a sequential series of steps, beginning with the specification of objectives (see for example, Tyler, 1949; Taba, 1962; Wheeler, 1976; Tyler, 1977). This sequential conceptualisation has been designated as a "rational", "logical", "scientific" or "means-ends" model of curriculum, and has been advocated as an approach to effective curriculum development (see for example Smith, Stanley and Shores, 1957; Taba, 1962; Cohen, 1964; Saylor and Alexander, 1966; Kerr, 1968; Wheeler, 1976; Hawes, 1979:19-25).

Although Taba's (1962:425) approach to curriculum development was based on the Tyler questions, she pointed out that this approach failed to indicate adequately the bases on which the decisions regarding these elements were to be made. Implicit in her argument was the assumption that, having established valid criteria for decisions, curriculum development could be a rational, scientific process. She stated that

> If curriculum development is to be a rational and a scientific rather than a rule-of-thumb procedure, the decisions about these elements (of the curriculum) need to be made on the basis of some valid criteria....., scientific curriculum development needs to draw upon analyses of society and culture, studies of the learner and the learning process, and analyses of the nature of knowledge in order to determine the purposes of the school and the nature of its curriculum. (Taba, 1962:10)

The "rational curriculum planning model" (often wrongly attributed to Tyler's (1949:128) approach) has had a major influence on curriculum development, and has been used as the basis of many other curriculum development models. Those proposed by Taba (1962), Cohen (1964), Taylor (1967), Kerr (1968), Popham & Baker (1970), Gagné & Briggs (1974) and Wheeler (1976), can all be viewed as refinements or variations of the basic model which represented diagrammatically in Figure 2.1

Specification of objectives → Learning experiences → Organisation of learning experiences → Evaluation student progress

Figure 2.1
Rational Curriculum Planning Model

What is implied in this sequential model is that curriculum development is an ordered, step-wise process, i.e., one first decides on the objectives, and then, having decided on these, makes decisions about which learning experiences are appropriate, and so on.

This has recently been criticised by curriculum developers and theorists (e.g., Kliebard (1970), Cohen (1974), Walker (1975), Skilbeck (1975), Zahorik (1975)) as being an inadequate representation of what actually happens in practice. As Skilbeck succinctly stated

> it is neither a correct description of how curricula are treated, implemented, evaluated and revised, nor a valid prescription for action. It is fundamentally flawed to the extent that it rests on behaviouristic premises, and it is a remarkable oversimplification of what is a highly complex and only partially understood process.
>
> (Skilbeck, 1975:7)

An alternative model has emerged in recent years, one which can be termed the dynamic model, because it proposed that decisions about curriculum elements may not necessarily be rational. A refinement of this model was recently developed by Cohen, Deer, Harrison and Josephsen (1978) (see Figure 2.2). This "interactive people-centred model of curriculum" not only shows the dynamic interactions, but also

- implies that intention and reality are not necessarily congruent,
- indicates that the curriculum development processes operate in a context (the human and physical characteristics of the educational institution in which the curriculum is developed and implemented),
- places decisions by people as the central factor in the process, and
- highlights the fact that there is no one specified order in which decisions are made (i.e., that decisions about the four curriculum elements may be made in any sequence).

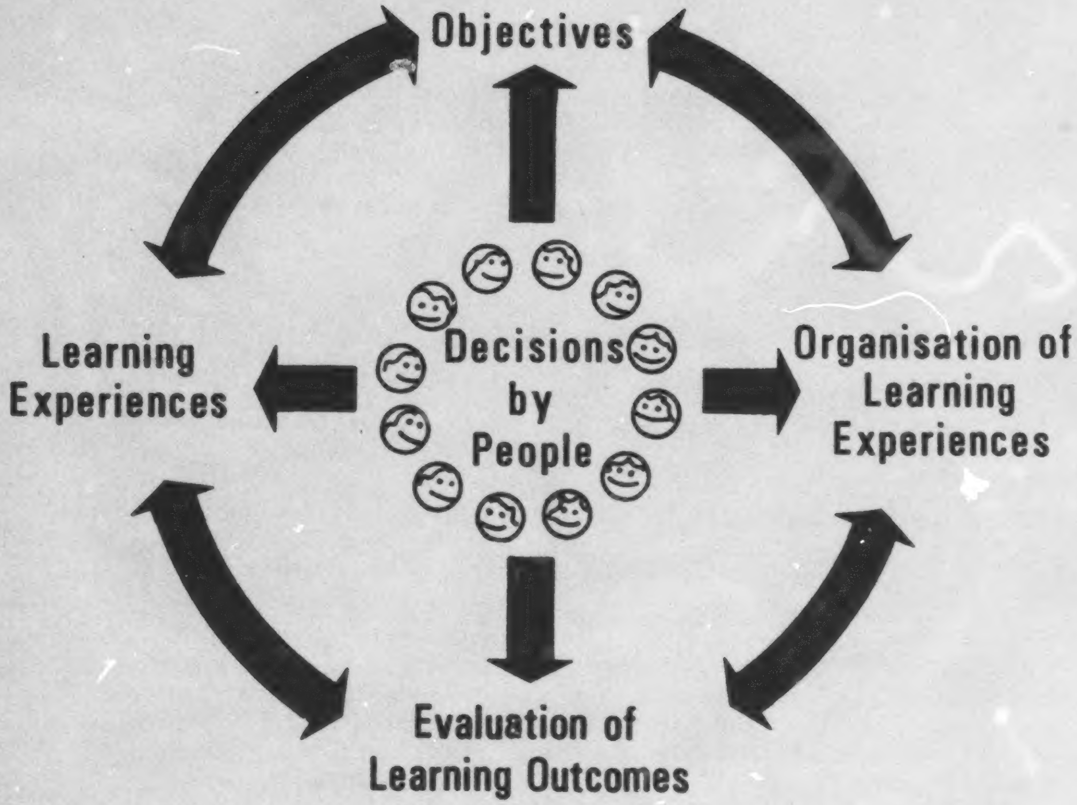

Objectives
Learning Experiences
Decisions by People
Organisation of Learning Experiences
Evaluation of Learning Outcomes

Figure 2.2: An Interactive People Centred Model (Cohen, Deer, Harrison and Josephsen, 1978)

(b) Research Evidence about Curriculum Theories

The available empirical evidence did not support the rational or sequential model of curriculum processes as a valid theory.

A report of a study of the implementation of Social Science curriculum materials stated that teachers did not follow the sequential model but rather made decisions in a pragmatic, dynamic manner (Tom, 1973:86-93). Developers of two Social Science curriculum units in Victoria (Australia) acted in a manner that was "chaotic" and "subject to the dynamics inherent in the situation rather than using a linear process" (Bullivant, 1974). The linear model did not represent the characteristic features of curriculum processes used by three university project teams studies by Walker (1969, 1971a, 1975) who described the observed process as "practical reasoning". He designated this process as a type of rationality not based on given facts and objectives, but rather on "rational consideration of the merits of things created" (Walker, 1975:132). On the basis of empirical evidence, Walker suggested a descriptive model of curriculum, involving three basic stages, namely

- the platform (the concepts, theories, beliefs brought to the task by developers),
- deliberation of both ends and means (sometimes based on data), and
- design (the relationships represented in the materials produced).

Fox suggested from his experience that

> ... when the curriculum is prepared through deliberation, objectives arise only in one of the final stages of the discussion. Objectives can be considered to be memorials to the deliberation. (Fox, 1972).

One of the three teams observed by Walker (1975:131) comprised members of the Kettering Art Project team. Walker found that they:

- did not state objectives early in the process or use objectives as guides for their work,
- began with and were guided by a shared commitment to certain beliefs and ideas,
- followed a process where they solved problems as they arose,
- drew information from their general experience and incidental observations of schools, rather than from deliberate data collection, and
- used few data about society, students or subject matter as sources for curriculum deliberation (Walker, 1975:131).

The evidence from the above studies casts doubt on the rational model as an accurate representation of curriculum as practised by the three teams observed by Walker. Three studies of school and university teachers engaged in curriculum processes also supported the findings that decisions were not made in linear fashion and did not focus primarily on objectives (see MacDonald, 1965:571-76; Hall, 1975:166-7; Zahorik, 1975:136-7). In fact, Zahorik (1975) found in a survey of 194 teachers in a USA metropolitan city school system that respondents reported beginning their planning more often with content than with any other curriculum component. Decision-making by Palo Alto district planning teams also was reported by observers to be not strictly linear (Johnson and Stromquist, 1976:18).

The problem facing curriculum theorists and practitioners alike has been summarised thus:

> We must beware of believing that in the objectives model - or in any other model or theory - we have a systematic solution to our curricular problems, much less an educational panacea... The function of such a theory is not to command allegiance, but to attract the criticism and experimental testing which will lead to its refutation and refinement (Stenhouse, 1975:71).

Curriculum theory generally appeared to lack agreed and empirically-based definitions and models. The Curriculum Action Project aimed to contribute to such theory development and refinement.

2. CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING

Writers about curriculum have suggested various decision-making processes which could or should produce efficient curriculum plans.

(a) Theory and Models

Earlier writers about curriculum decision-making (for example, Gregg, 1957; Griffiths, 1959) tended to advocate a so-called "scientific" approach purportedly followed by scientists when solving problems. This process had also been advocated in a systematic approach to organisational management (see Simon, 1950). With minor variations, this "rational" problem-solving process involved the following sequential steps:

(i) recognise, define and limit the problem;
(ii) analyse and evaluate the problem;
(iii) establish criteria by which to evaluate suggested solutions;
(iv) collect data;
(v) formulate and select preferred solution(s) and test in advance;
(vi) put the preferred solution(s) into effect;
(vii) evaluate the results (and the process)

(see for example, Feyereisen et al., 1970; Myers, 1970; Pharis, Robinson and Walden, 1970; Maddocks, 1973; Moore, 1973:2; Prentice, 1973; Silva, 1973; Tye, 1973; McCordic, 1974; Young, 1974:13; Watts, 1975:13-19; Posner, 1976; Barker, 1977:43-56; Carbines, 1977:14-20).

In contrast to a logical, data-based approach to decision-making about curriculum, many writers have stated that "values and value judgements permeate curriculum decisions" (Beauchamp, 1975:85), or that values are the beginning point of curriculum decision-making (see for example, Goodlad and Richter, 1966; Kirst and Walker, 1971:482; Hill, 1973:158; MacDonald and Clark, 1973; Moore, 1973:7; Ubbelohde, 1973:5; Blyth, 1974:102; Harrison, 1974; Speiker, 1974; Wheeler, 1974:158; Beauchamp, 1975:89; Joseph and Short, 1975:204-8; Reid, 1975:255; Skilbeck, 1975:4; Weinberg and Skager, 1975:191; Reynolds and Skilbeck, 1976:101-2; Newfield, 1977:1; Apple, 1978:19). Curriculum plans and decision-making also have been viewed as having been directed by decision-makers' values about knowledge and how it is acquired (Hill, 1973:151).

Some writers have suggested that there are alternative approaches to decision-making processes. Decision-making has been perceived as a functional compromise between the reality and the ideal (Tandow, 1967). Allison (1971) and Crowson (1975) proposed three possible models of decision-making:

- rationality, and/or
- an organisational process, grounded in a complex, organisational context, and/or
- a political process, of competition for power, of conflict and consensus-building.

The three approaches embodied in these models may well be used at different points in the total decision-making process, Crowson (1975) suggested. Thus curriculum decision-making was placed firmly in a social context where human interaction made rationality, as normally defined, an infrequent occurrence.

Indeed, the findings from a study (Cohen, 1971) of leading Australian scientists who had been elected as Members of the Australian Academy of Science indicated that even the most distinguished scientists often did not achieve their discoveries and fame following systematic problem-solving strategies nor what are often designated as "scientific" or "rational" decision-making processes.

Likert (1961:216-7) had earlier contrasted an individualistic, independent approach to problem-solving with coordinated approaches. He suggested that where individuals operated independently to gather and analyse facts to arrive at separate solutions, conflict arose as each tried to force a solution on the other person, resulting in a compromise to which noone was committed. Where there was a coordinated approach to fact gathering, combined with group analyses, interpretation, discussion and decision-making, Likert suggested that the solution would be of high quality and each person would be motivated towards its implementation.

Various strategies to be used for enabling persons in a social context to work together on curriculum decision-making have been proposed by O'Hanlon (1973/4). He hypothesised that each of these strategies demanded differing levels of sophistication. They were labelled as "management", "systematic" and "open-access" approaches. O'Hanlon suggested that they could be placed on a continuum according to the degree of participation involved. The management approach, O'Hanlon argued, focussed on the authority of the manager of the curriculum team; the systematic approach was basically rational, relating all planning to the stated objectives; the open-access approach depended on the participation in decision-making of all persons who would be affected by or have to implement the decisions made. O'Hanlon considered that the highest level of sophistication occurred when a curriculum team could use all three approaches as appropriate. A similar continuum of curriculum decision-making processes, ranging from "egocentric" to "mutualistic" or "collegial" was proposed by Aoki (1974) and Southworth (1973). Aoki (1974) drew attention to a discernible movement of curriculum developers away from use of the management or egocentric approach towards the more participative end of the continuum.

(b) Research Evidence about Curriculum Decision-Making Processes

A review of literature indicated a lack of empirical evidence from both survey and field studies which might confer greater validity upon any one model of curriculum decision-making processes compared with any other.

(i) Rationality

Two writers who reviewed the literature of curriculum decision-making research (Mann, 1974:1-10; Meyer, 1977) were both critical of the assumption that rational problem-solving procedures were appropriate for educational or curriculum decision-making. Mann (1974:10) concluded that research over the previous 20 years had shown that decision-makers in the public and business sectors had not acted rationally, but rather made decisions before searching for alternatives. The assumption that curriculum could be improved by rational processes was the main cause of failure in educational policy-making, Meyer (1977) suggested.

In a field study of curriculum decision-making, Shaw (1972:59) found that the theory of rational decision-making had been of little value in a College of Education, particularly in regard to curriculum issues. He suggested that decisions were not based on quantitative data but rather on what

> ... the participants in the decision carry about in their heads; belief systems and ideologies about values and preferences, about goals and priorities... The model for such decisions is not that of business but that of diplomacy (Shaw, 1972:59).

Several other empirical studies have produced similar findings to those of Shaw. Ammons (1964) used questionnaires and interviews administered to top administrators and teachers in 359 elementary school systems within a 300-mile radius of Chicago to investigate processes used in determining educational objectives. Interview data were scored by a panel of four judges on the indices used. She concluded that, in general, curriculum workers in her sample did not use systematic processes in the development of objectives. A field study of processes used in district-wide curriculum planning was conducted by Johnson and Stromquist (1976) in the Palo Alto (California) school district. This disclosed that teams did not use a strictly linear process.

> There were many feedback loops between problem choice and data-gathering before the shaping of the proposal was begun. Planning teams frequently said that they "uncovered" issues as they "went through the information" and "asked new questions as they became more knowledgeable" (Johnson and Stromquist, 1976:18).

Johnson (1976:44) suggested that these studies confirmed what school administrators had always known:

> ... the decision process is always "messy", compared to clear cut, idealized, "normative" decision-making models... The messiness of the *planning* process is compounded by the messiness of the accompanying *people or group process* (Johnson, 1976:44-45).

Data from case study observations made of teams involved in the planning of new schools supported this contention that a *rational* decision-making process was not used (Sieber, 1976:9). Van Manen (1976) studied the way pre-service teachers went about planning curriculum units, also finding little application of systematic decision-making processes. One group of educational evaluators, however, claimed that they taught planners to use a systematic, linear model for decision-making for schools within the Montgomery School District, New Jersey (Tuckman, Ondrejack and Williams, 1977:7-14).

The Institute for Development of Educational Activities (/I/D/E/A/) research team conducted field studies in 18 schools in U.S.A. over a five-year period. From their observations of school staffs engaged in bringing about educational change, they generalised that staff proceeded through a series of four stages which they named as dialogue, decision about activities, actions taken and evaluation (DDAE). They further considered that these stages were parts of a cyclical, rational-type process (Lieberman and Shiman, 1973; Bentzen *et al*., 1974; Seeman and Seeman, 1976). By contrast, Walker (1975) observed the Kettering Art Project team making decisions, analysed transcripts and documents from their meetings, and concluded that they rarely followed the "rational-scientific" ideal. Slightly more than half of the arguments advanced in discussions, he reported, were based on personal judgements rather than on data (Walker, 1975:121), whereas one would expect decisions to be data-based in an application of the rational, problem-solving model. Again, observational data used by the team were obtained fortuitously, rather than deliberately, a further negation of rationality. Walker (1975:132) claimed that the team behaved rationally in the broad sense of the word, and that curriculum development had, or can have "a type of rationality" not simply dependent on facts about determinants, but involving rational consideration of the relative merits of various curriculum solutions. At best, within a variety of settings, the empirical evidence was conflicting concerning the applications of rational decision-making to curriculum issues.

(ii) Participation in decision-making

From his empirical evidence, Shaw (1975:87) generalised that curriculum decision-making was

> ... a continuous negotiation process, institutionalized but not heavily formalized, and rooted deep in the culture of the enterprise...

thus drawing attention to the relationship between decision-making, human processes and social settings. In agreement with Likert's (1961) contention that participation by decision-makers leads to their commitment to implementation of decisions, surveys by Chase (1952) and Sharma (1955) in USA, and by Hewitson (1978) in Canada showed that where teachers reported high participation in decision-making, they also reported high levels of enthusiasm and professional satisfaction. However, surveys conducted in Britain (Brown, 1971) and Australia (Beeson and Gunstone, 1975; Anstee, 1976; Evans, Carss and Greco, 1977; Cohen and Harrison, 1978) reported school staff perceptions that infrequent or no total staff curriculum decision-making meetings were held within schools, teachers mostly indicating that they worked alone or in departmental groups.

A number of survey and field studies suggested that curriculum decisions in many schools indeed were made using the "management approach" described by O'Hanlon (1973/4). Teachers who were surveyed reported their perceptions that decision-making was located in the principal's office (see for example, Belasco, and Alutto, 1972:44-58; Schaffarzick, 1976; Simonson, Poncelow and McLure, 1976:51-53). Some researchers acting as observers reported similar findings to those of the teachers (see Rothstein, 1975:41-48; Parkay, 1976:384-390).

However, Hanson (1976-7:29) observed in three schools a mixture of centralised, authoritarian decision-making by the principal, and individualised decision-making by teachers. Griffin (1973) also found that teachers participated, often unilaterally, in making curricular decisions. In a study of eight schools participating in the Keele project in England, Shipman, Bolam and Jenkins (1974) found that teachers claimed they had not been involved in deciding to participate in decisions in this curriculum project, whereas principals considered that such decisions had been made by agreement of the total staff.

Knoop and O'Reilly (1976:153-58) surveyed 192 secondary school teachers from six randomly selected Ontario school boards. They reported that most respondents perceived that departmental heads or teachers, acting in a centralist way, made planning decisions about curriculum. These researchers also reported that teachers generally desired more participation than they had in curriculum decision-making, indicating a preference for voting on decisions as a total staff after consultation, rather than a centralist approach. These findings were supported in studies by Hughes (1977:43) and Simonson et al., (1976). Best (1975) reported that most teachers perceived they were participating to the preferred degree in decision-making.

In a major American study commissioned by the National Institute of Education, Scharffazick et al., (1976) found a concern for greater involvement at all levels of the USA educational system. This concern was accompanied by a feeling of lack of power and influence where "...somebody else controls the ball game, be it professionals, bureaucrats or some ubiquitous 'they'." In a Canadian study of 1268 personnel in 139 schools in Alberta, Young (1979) found ambivalence in willingness to participate in curriculum decision-making, which varied according to the depth and scope of involvement.

Summarising, there was empirical evidence showing a variety of approaches used by people in schools for working together on curriculum decision-making. The desire by teachers to participate depended upon the nature of decisions to be made, and the findings from some studies suggested that teachers already participate to their desired levels. Available findings tended to support the need to study the context of curriculum decision-making and the human processes involved when investigating curriculum decision-making processes themselves (c.f, Allison (1971) and Crowson, 1975).

3. THE SCHOOL AS AN ORGANISATION

When considering curriculum decision-making within the setting of an actual school, the school itself may be viewed as a social system. Schools are organisations devised by society to achieve broad purposes for the education of its members. Factors involved in SBCD are related to organisational aspects of the school contexts (see, for example, Skilbeck, 1976; 1977a).

A school has been defined as a relatively complex organisation in which the goals of those in charge may or may not be held by its members and which is bounded from its environment. Thus the school is seen as a social system (see Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1974:24). A social system consists of interlocking social positions, whose incumbents are expected to behave in a reasonably well-agreed manner, though some degree of tolerance may be permitted. Positions are socially given, and members (both staff and students) are processed into the system by the organisation. Goals are characteristically vaguely-defined. Boundaries are established by the technology (instructional system) used, the population served, and the services rendered (adapted from Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1974:24).

Identification of organisational factors and characteristics has been undertaken by social scientists during several decades (see for example, Weber, 1947; Argyris, 1962; Bennis, 1966; Katz and Kahn, 1966; Miles, 1967; Schmuck and Miles, 1971; Hersey and Blanchard, 1972; Likert, 1973; Owens and Steinhoff, 1976; Bennis *et al.*, 1976; Eggleston, 1977). One result of the proliferation of literature has been a confusion in terminology and conceptualisation of organisation. Some attempts to synthesise such concepts in relation to schools have been made (see for example, Burns and Stalker, 1961; Leavitt, 1965; Miles, 1965, 1967; Bennis *et al.*, 1969; Watson, 1969; Owens and Steinhoff, 1975; Lawler, 1977; Shortell, 1977). Social scientists have studied schools as social systems and attempted to describe their characteristics from a sociological perspective (see for example, Barker and Gump, 1964; Jackson, 1968; Grassie, 1971; Gross *et al.*, 1971; Sarason, 1971; Smith and Keith, 1971; McPherson, 1972; Wilson, 1972; Cusick, 1973; Bentzen *et al.*, 1974; Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1974; Keith, 1975; Sharp *et al.*, 1975; Hamilton, 1976; Eastabrook and Fullan, 1977; Wolcott, 1977).

It was considered that some conceptualisation of the school as a social system was needed in conducting social science research (see Harvey, 1973; Taylor *et al.*, 1974; Cicourel, 1975; Goodlad, 1975; Skilbeck, 1976).

Any prior conceptualisations needed to be critically examined as evidence emerged from a field study, so as to provide direction to revision of constructs, hypotheses, models and generalisations. The conceptual framework of the school social system chosen as appropriate to the Curriculum Action Project was one suggested by Leavitt (1965) adapted by Owens and Steinhoff (1976), and refined by Harrison (1978). In this conceptualisation, a school was seen to comprise four interacting syb-systems designated as

"- curriculum/the task of the school
- resource utilisation : involving administrative/organisational matters, curriculum materials, money/funds, space, time, physical plant (buildings, grounds equipment), parents and other human resources from outside and in the school (including ancillary staff, curriculum consultants), and community resources both human and material;
- structure : including means of allocating staff to specialist roles, designation of roles, industrial/political conditions, teacher development efforts to increase skills, and rules/regulations/expectations/sanctions involved (that is, the hidden curriculum);
- human relationships : including those of staff with each other and with learners, shared meanings (school philosophy), decision-making and communication processes used for staff and with parents, staff morale (or provision of amenities to meet their needs), and teamwork and/or leadership style adopted."

The location of these sub-systems in the social system as a whole is illustrated in Figure 2.3. This conceptualisation of the school was used as a framework for some aspects of data analyses.

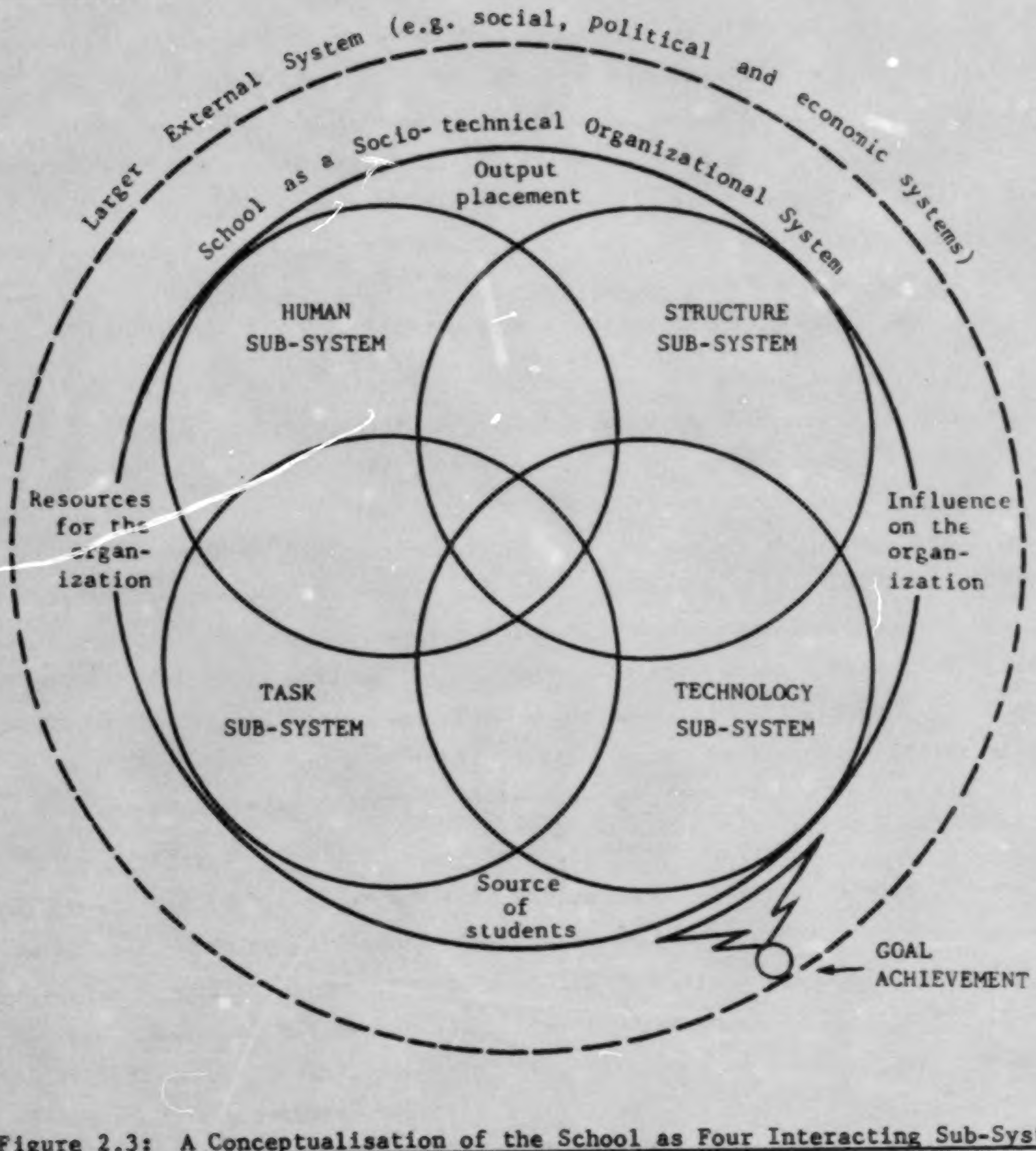

Larger External System (e.g. social, political and economic systems)
School as a Socio-technical Organizational System
Output placement
HUMAN SUB-SYSTEM
STRUCTURE SUB-SYSTEM
Resources for the organization
Influence on the organization
TASK SUB-SYSTEM
TECHNOLOGY SUB-SYSTEM
Source of students
GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

Figure 2.3: A Conceptualisation of the School as Four Interacting Sub-Systems (Owens and Steinhoff, 1976:143)

4. SCHOOL-BASED CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING

The devolution of responsibility for curriculum decision-making in the 1970's from the central authority towards the school has been documented for Canada (see Owen, 1970; Williams, 1974; Young, 1979), for USA (see Pierce, 1978), for Britain (see Connelly, 1972; Eggleston, 1973; Bernbaum, 1973), and for most member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (see OECD/CERI/CDC, 1976). A similar trend towards SBCD has been documented in the eight states and territories of Australia (see Musgrave, 1974; Australian Frontier, 1975; Beeson and Gunstone, 1975; Dufty, 1975; Evans, 1975; Shinkfield, 1975; Townsend, 1975; Maddocks, 1976; Skilbeck, 1976; Brown, 1977; Cohen and Harrison, 1977b; Styles, 1977; Cohen, 1978; Walton & Morgan, 1978).

A statement paving the way for the implementation of SBCD in South Australia (SA) was made by Jones (1968), the then Director-General of Education. Reports of a committee to investigate school and society in Tasmania (TAS) in 1968, and the Radford Committee (1970) in Queensland (QLD) initiated SBCD in those two states. Statements issued by Director-General in Victoria (VIC) (1970) and SA (1970) legitimised SBCD within those states, giving responsibility to each school for its own curriculum. Other statements followed as the decade progressed, until by 1978 all states had shifted major responsibilities for curriculum decision-making towards the schools (see Victorian Department of Education, 1976; Herschell, 1976 (QLD); Giles, 1976 (SA); Swan, 1977 (NSW); Mossenson, 1978 (WA); Nielson, 1978 (NT)).

In 1975, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) was established in Canberra by the Australian Government. Its charter included the study of curriculum processes, with particular reference to the relationships between teacher development, organisational development, and curriculum development (CDC, 1975, 1977). Prior to this event, the Australian Government had established the Schools Commission, which funded innovations at the school level. In 1976, a national conference about support structures for curriculum development (sponsored by CDC and OECD/CERI) resulted in the establishment by CDC of working groups making recommendations about strategies needed to provide support for schools for SBCD, investigation of the operational curriculum, and evaluation of SBCD. It can thus be seen that SBCD was a comparatively recent phenomenon within Australian educational history. There was recognised a need both for support and investigation of SBCD (c.f, Cohen, 1978; Maxwell, 1979; Maxwell 1980).

Concurrent with the growth of SBCD have been writings about definitions, models for its introduction to the school, and about who should be involved, how SBCD should be implemented and the factors which would assist SBCD to become more effective. Some survey investigations have been undertaken in an attempt to provide empirical evidence about SBCD. Theoretical writings and research evidence about factors involved in SBCD are discussed later in this chapter.

(a) Evidence of decisions made in SBCD

Despite the duration of at least a decade of opportunities for implementing SBCD in several states of Australia, there have been almost no Australian studies documenting its implementation. There also has been a dearth of studies overseas with the exception of those now to be reported. From a USA study of plans made by teachers prior to entering the classroom, Zahorik (1974) reported that the first-made decision of the total group of teachers was related to content. The most frequently occurring decision, made by 81 per cent of the teachers in the sample, related to activities. As teachers increased in age and experience, they reported that they were more likely to consider objectives first. A field study conducted by Hanson (1976-7:28) in three metropolitan schools in USA showed that teachers tended to feel that they made decisions about the teaching-learning process, if not about other curriculum decisions.

In Canada, Olsen and Kitto (1977) reported that teachers devoted little time to curriculum decision-making. In Australia, Varley (1975) found that 75 per cent of the 259 primary teachers in a Brisbane survey about science teaching followed the syllabus provided by the central authority only moderately closely. These primary school teachers perceived their task as making decisions to adapt decisions made by the central authority. Another report about SBCD in an Australian school was the doctoral study of Harrison (1978) conducted at "Talktown" Primary School. Maxwell (1980) reported upon the experiences of a high school staff in implementing SBCD. With such little evidence, valid generalisations about the content of curriculum decision-making in schools could not be drawn.

As indicated in Section 2 (a) of this chapter (pp 15-17), theories about participation in SBCD have been proposed. Some writers suggested that all persons who were to implement decisions should participate in decision-making about them. SBCD, not to be conceptualised as teacher-based curriculum development, should be a cooperative effort (see Myers, 1970; Young, 1974; Skilbeck, 1977a; Cohen, 1978), it was said. However, few previous descriptive studies of school-based decision-making processes have been reported in Australian research sources(Maxwell, 1980).

(i) Decision-makers

Outside Australia, few studies identified decision-makers about curriculum at the school level. Myers (1970) suggested that usually the school principal made curriculum decisions without consulting the teachers, or that decision-making was dominated by small groups of influential teachers. In 1974, Taylor et al. conducted a survey of 12 primary schools in one British local government authority. Of the 120 teachers completing the questionnaire, most rated the "head teacher" as having greatest influence on decisions about teaching methods and organisation in the classroom. In a Canadian survey, Ponder and Bulock (1976) reported that teachers perceived less participation than they desired in curriculum decision-making.

Most Australian studies have been surveys of teacher perceptions in relation to SBCD at the secondary school level. Surveys by Simpkins (1972), Evans et al. (1977), and Cohen and Harrison (1978) all reported that teachers perceived the administration and/or the subject master exercising most authority in curriculum decision-making. Respondents to the Simpkins survey reported a desire for the formal staff group to make decisions, though they were unsure about who should make curriculum decisions. By contrast, a survey of Victorian science teachers conducted by Beeson and Gunstone (1975) indicated that 52 per cent of teachers perceived decisions about courses located within the total science staff. The low response rate (21 per cent of all schools sampled) may explain the difference in these results from those of other investigators. In an observational and interview-based study of Australian teachers planning a social science unit, decision-making appeared to be "idiosyncratic" and individualistic rather than cooperative (Toomey, 1977). Impressionistic data led Osborne (1977) to the statement that little whole-school participation in decision-making existed in NSW schools. Osborne (1977:24) further suggested that some decisions of a routine or emergency nature needed on-the-spot attention and decisive action by the principal or executive, longer-term group decision-making being inappropriate.

(ii) Decision-making

Apart from observational studies of curriculum decision-making (already reported in 1 (a) and (b)), there have been almost no studies of school staffs engaged in SBCD (see Toomey, 1977), and none located for primary school level. Both Taylor (1974:64) and Skilbeck (1977a:5) have urged that studies be conducted in sufficient depth to enable the reconceptualisation of SBCD.

> What I have in mind is the need to define the parameters of the field, to identify a set of key concepts, to indicate relationships amongst these key concepts, and systematically to relate these concepts to the field of action to which they refer (Skilbeck, 1977a:5).

(b) Factors in SBCD

As a result of her survey of 44 research reports and 51 theoretical writings, Harrison (1979) identified 62 possible factors involved in SBCD.

Harrison (1979:49) stated

> Of the 44 research reports, 17 (38.6 per cent) were of field studies conducted in a variety of educational settings such as secondary schools, tertiary institutions, and colleges.... Prior to 1970, there appeared to have been little curriculum decision-making research reported (14.3 per cent of the references located from this period). During 1970-1974, 41.8 per cent, and from 1975 onwards 50.6 per cent, of listed references were of research reports, illustrating a growing interest in this field of research as the degree of curriculum decision-making responsibility increased at the school level. Six factors suggested within the summary of literature appeared to be supported by six or more studies, these factors being
>
> - role expectations of the principal,
> - principal's leadership style,
> - participants' values and attitudes,
> - participants' perceptions of the situation,
> - participants' motivations and desires, and
> - level of staff participation in decision-making.

In contrast, 38 factors had emerged in only from one to five studies, namely

- teacher characteristics,
- teacher style,
- participants' expectations,
- participants' attitudes to change,
- staff professionalism,
- role expectations,
- conflict of values or ideas,
- the negotiation process used,
- communication between staff members,
- interpersonal relationships,
- group interaction processes,
- level of cooperation or competition,
- climate, morale or atmosphere of the school,
- cognitive dissonance,
- level of staff cohesiveness,
- level of teacher authority or power,
- staff job allocation,
- problem-solving process used,
- continuity of staffing,
- school size,
- support structures within the school,
- bureaucratic or non-bureaucratic nature of the organisation,
- resources available,
- time for planning,
- information base used,
- ancillary staff provision,
- feedback from curriculum implementation,
- timetable,
- interaction between intention and reality,
- use of temporary task groups,
- staff engagement in a continuous learning process,
- social values,
- events in the community,
- boundary flexibility between the school and community,
- parental pressure,
- outside resource personnel,
- consultant's intervention style, and
- external education authorities.

In addition, 15 factors were hypothesised in literature without supporting studies being located by the investigator, namely

- participants' skill in group processes,
- staff planning skills,
- rewards, status and prestige,
- teacher development efforts,
- the power and influence process operating within the school,
- organisational or administrative structure,
- evaluation,
- data gathering techniques,
- goals and goal achievement,
- the historical context of the school,
- consultants to the school,
- professional support,
- the culture of the school,
- the political context, and
- pressure groups other than parents.

From this type of "meta-analysis" (advocated by Glass, 1976), there also appeared to be several cases of a phenomenon being described in different terms by different authors, without clear definition of what was meant. For example, "participants' motivations" may well overlap with "participants' commitment"; "the negotiation process" could well mean "decision-making", "power of influence process" or "problem-solving process"; "organisational or administrative structure" could be a broad term encompassing "bureaucratic or non-bureaucratic nature of the organisation"; "evaluation", "data gathering techniques" and "feedback from curriculum implementation" could all be synonymous, depending on how they were defined.

Harrison (1979:51-52) concluded from the literature surveyed that curriculum decision-making, especially in school settings, remained a largely unmapped field. Even though many factors had been identified as possibly involved, there had been little drawing together of data from various studies to develop models, generalisations or hypothesised relationships between factors. Studies had mainly been surveys of teacher opinion rather than descriptions of SBCD in its natural setting within schools. As the 70's decade had progressed, more attention had been given to sociological analyses of institution-based curriculum decision-making, as evidenced by the emergence in the literature of reference to structural, technological and task sub-system factors. There had also been an increased focus on interpersonal or group factors within the human dimension. As only nine (20.5 per cent) of the 44 research reports surveyed were conducted within Australia, and only three (6.8 per cent) were Australian field studies, it was also concluded that a study to test hypotheses about relationships between factors involved in SBCD as implemented in Australian schools would have been premature.

The Curriculum Action Project team had likewise decided to undertake an exploratory study with a view to illuminating the parameters, concepts, and issues, rather than attempt to gather evidence about preconceived hypotheses.

5. CONSULTANCIES WITH SCHOOL STAFFS

In working with a school on SBCD, the members of the Curriculum Action Project (CAP) research team were acting as "consultants" to a school staff. A review of literature on consultancy suggested a variety of possible approaches for working with a school staff on curriculum improvement.

One such approach which has received increasing publicity is that known as "organisation development" (OD) (see Fullan, Miles and Taylor, 1980). OD has been defined as

> ... a long range effort to improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of organization culture ... with the assistance of a change agent, or catalyst, and the use of the theory and technology of applied behavioral science, including action research (French and Bell, 1973:15).

Schmuck and Miles (1971) suggested that OD strategies could be evaluated using the coordinates of a three-dimensional matrix as criteria, namely the

- focus of attention for the exercise,
- diagnosed problems to be solved, and
- mode of intervention.

The focus might be on the total organisation, intergroup structures, a team or group, a diad/triad, participants' roles and/or an individual. Problems dealt with could be goals or plans, communication, the culture or "climate", leadership/authority, problem-solving processes, conflict resolution or cooperation mechanisms, role definitions or any other aspect of the organisation. Intervention modes could be training/education, process consultation, coaching, confrontation, data feedback, problem-solving procedures, planning activities, a task force in the organisation and/or a "techno-structural activity" (Schmuck and Miles, 1971). These were considered useful dimensions for developing evaluative criteria.

Consultancy approaches have been defined along an intervention continuum. This continuum ranges from "acceptant" at one end, to use of principles, theories or models, with increasing direction exerted by the consultant(s) at the other (Blake and Mouton, 1972:1-10). Several consultancy models were defined as follows:

- ... acceptant: entering a situation to contact the feelings, tensions, and subjective attitudes that block the person(s) and often make effective functioning difficult, in order to enable the expression, working through and resolution of those feelings for a more objective and task oriented approach;
- catalytic: (or facilitative) entering a situation and adding something that results in a transformation of the situation to some degree from what it was prior to the intervention;

- confrontation: entering a situation with much more challenge than in the catalytic approach; a more active intrusion into the situation with more challenge to the status quo;
- prescriptive: an expert invited in by the management to study the situation and provide a recommended solution; entering a situation to tell the participants what to do;
- principles, theories and models: entering a situation to assist the participants to gain insights from principles, theories and models so that they can evaluate alternatives, choose and take action and predict outcomes, that is intervention by ideas and concepts (Harrison, 1979 151 - 152, after Blake & Mouton, 1972)

Several of these approaches might be used in any one consultation. One approach might be dominant, and it would be possible to identify the dominant mode.

For the first year (1977), it was decided by the Curriculum Action Project (CAP) team to restrict its involvement in the ethnographic study at (Eucalypt Grove High School) to participant observation only. This was seen as a year of becoming accepted within the "school culture", and of providing some feedback to the school community concerning the research team's observations.

When it was requested by the school staff that the CAP research should extend into 1978, a decision was then made by the CAP team to function in roles which were consistent with "process consultation" (Schein, 1969:4-8). This was defined as

> a joint diagnosis by client and consultant, with no clear mission or need previously defined; diagnostic skills are passed on to the client; there is no premature advance of possible solutions by the consultant; the clients must see the problem (if any) for themselves and be actively involved in generating a remedy. The consultant sharpens the diagnosis and provides alternative "solutions", but the ultimate decision is made by the client. The skills involved are the ability to involve clients in self-diagnosis and problem-solving, basically in a non-dependent relationship between client and consultant (Harrison, 1979:154).

This approach was developed by Schein (1969), and had since been used by Argyris (1970) and Alderfer and Brown (1975) when working with school staffs.

Process consultancy may be viewed as comprising a number of stages, including

(i) establishment of contact and definition of the relationship between consultant and clients;

(ii) observation and data gathering of the normal work flow in meetings, formal and informal encounters between members, and of human processes in the organisational setting;

(iii) deliberate intervention activities such as

- agenda-setting by asking questions which direct attention to interpersonal issues, periods of analysing process, reviewing agendas, testing procedures; sessions devoted to learning interpersonal process skills; conceptual inputs;
- feedback of observational and other data during either the regular work time or after the analysis process, to groups and/or individuals;
- coaching or counselling of individuals or groups;
- structural suggestions about group membership, communication or interaction patterns, allocation of work, assignment of responsibility and lines of authority (Harrison, 1979:155).

(iv) evaluation of results;

(v) disengagement.

A meta-analysis of 67 cases of organisational development studies reported in the literature suggested that process consultancy could be a fruitful approach (Dunn and Swierczik, 1977:135-157). Results suggested that greatest success would result from participative, collaborative "process" approaches, focussing on the total organisation, using single or multiple untried, non-standardised procedures

A major purpose of process consultancy is to work in such a way that the consultant becomes redundant. The client group becomes independent and skilled in analysing and modifying their own processes. Process consultation is mainly catalytic and facilitative in style with occasional acceptant and confronting techniques, the use of principles, theories and models occurring after the event.

These above approaches were deliberately adopted by the CAP team. They allowed the study of the ways in which the school staff might initiate requests for help in SBCD, identifying possible areas of support for SBCD by curriculum consultants.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY

The literature review summarised in this chapter led the investigators to draw several conclusions about research on SBCD.

(a) Purpose of Research

There was a clearly-demonstrated need for empirical evidence within which to ground descriptive theories and models about curriculum processes, especially as practised in the field. Because of the shifting responsibility for curriculum decision-making towards the school, field studies needed to be located in schools as appropriate natural settings, in order to develop such empirically-based theories and models for SBCD.

The overall purposes in investigating SBCD were therefore to

- define the parameters of the field,
- identify key concepts,
- indicate relationships between these concepts,
- relate these concepts to the context or field of action, and
- develop explanatory models for and hypotheses about SBCD.

These purposes were largely in agreement with the research needs of SBCD as suggested by Skilbeck (1977:5).

(b) Problems to be Investigated

The literature review had identified three aspects of SBCD about which there was little empirical evidence, namely

- types and sequences of decisions made,
- decision-making processes used, and
- factors which influenced the decisions.

It was considered that data related to these aspects of SBCD could provide a basis for critically evaluating existing models and survey research evidence concerning SBCD, and for developing more adequate descriptions of SBCD in practice.

(c) Methodologies

The literature reviewed had identified a need for field studies describing curriculum decision-making processes as observed in practice. The literature summarised had also demonstrated the inadequacies of many such studies throughout the English-speaking world, and especially within Australia. Few of the located field studies had been conducted in schools. It was therefore decided that an indepth field study should accompany the survey of SBCD as perceived by school staffs. As there were few empirical studies of the phenomena of SBCD, it was considered inappropriate to develop hypotheses prior to the investigation. The problem was broadly conceived as outlined in (b) above, to provide foci for mapping the field of SBCD, and for developing a methodology for a field study of SBCD.

In chapter two, we have provided a brief review of significant literature concerning curriculum theories, models and research, curriculum decision-making (theories, models and research and with special reference to SBCD), consultancies with school staffs, and have indicated the implications of the literature for the CAP. In the chapter which follows, the methodology for both survey and ethnographic studies is considered.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPING THE METHODOLOGY

There were two complementary research strategies employed in CAP. These involved development of strategies to employ both survey and ethnographic methodologies. These methodologies are described in this section of the report.

1. SURVEY

(a) The purpose of the survey was to collect data about curriculum decision-making in a sample of Australian secondary schools in order

(i) to provide a national overview of aspects of curriculum decision-making;

(ii) to contribute to mapping the field of Australian decision-making as it occurs in Australian secondary schools, with particular reference to Years 7-10;

(iii) to assist in generating hypotheses, generalisations and models to explain the phenomena of curriculum decision-making; and

(iv) to generate data to facilitate comparisons within and between various groupings of teachers, department heads and principals.

(b) Instruments

Items for the questionnaires were developed from several sources. These included:

(i) an initial matrix delineating some of the possible parameters of SBCD. Items were written to investigate many of the cells generated from the matrix, and the draft and final forms were checked against this three-dimensional grid (see Figure 3.1);

(ii) a review of the literature concerning SBCD suggesting some additional aspects;

(iii) observations of SBCD in one primary school in NSW (Harrison 1976);

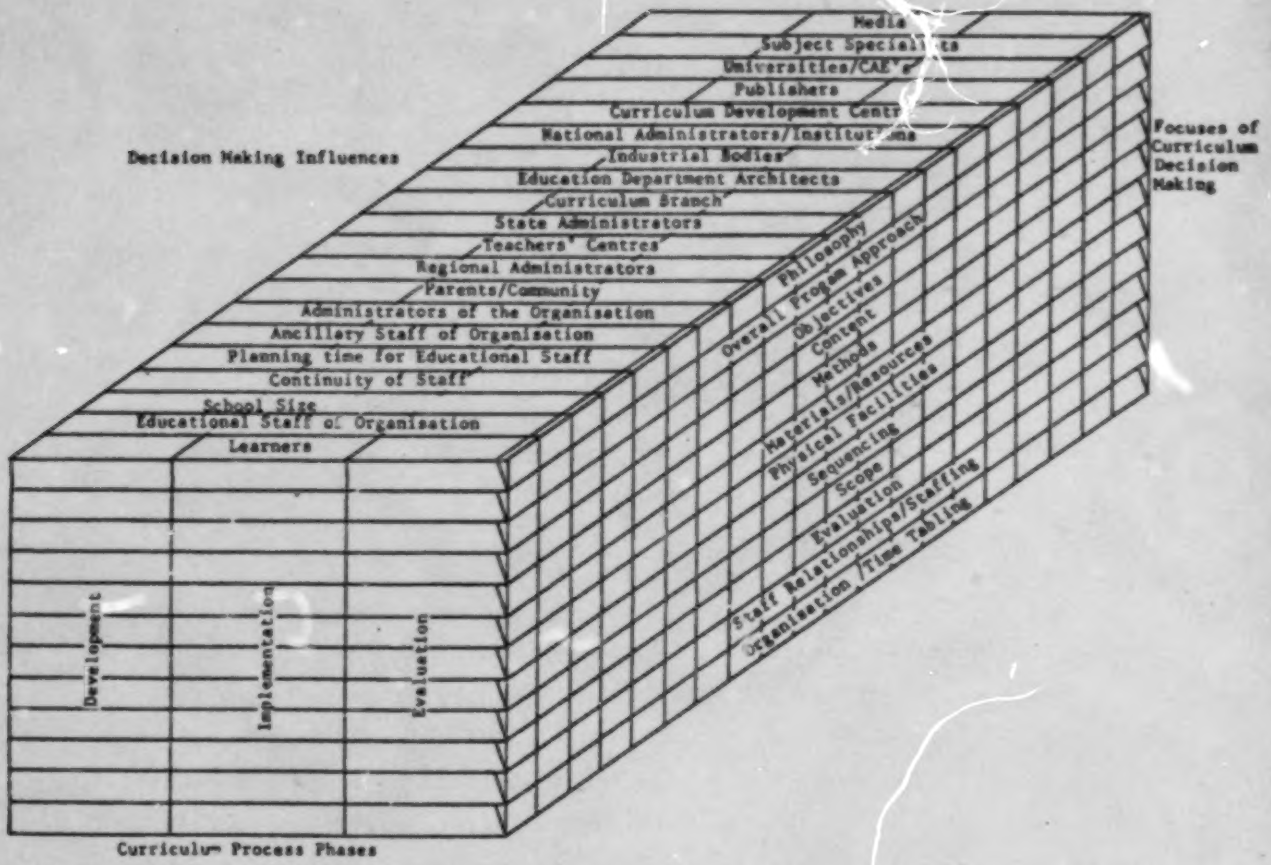

Media
Subject Specialists
Universities/CAE's
Publishers
Curriculum Development Centre
National Administrators/Institutions
Industrial Bodies
Education Department Architects
Curriculum Branch
State Administrators
Teachers' Centres
Regional Administrators
Parents/Community
Administrators of the Organisation
Ancillary Staff of Organisation
Planning time for Educational Staff
Continuity of Staff
School Size
Educational Staff of Organisation
Learners
Decision Making Influences
Focuses of Curriculum Decision Making
Philosophy
Overall Progam Approach
Objectives
Content
Methods
Materials/Resources
Physical Facilities
Sequencing
Scope
Evaluation
Staff Relationships/Staffing
Organisation /Time Tabling
Development
Implementation
Evaluation
Curriculum Process Phases

FIGURE 3.1

Initial Matrix Used to Generate Questionnaire Items concerning Curriculum Decision Making Processes (Cohen, Harrison, Thompson, Tye, 1977)

(iv) survey instruments developed at /I/D/E/A/ for a Study of Schooling in USA made available by Dr Ken Tye, the Program Officer, during a six-month term as Visiting Professor to Macquarie University in the first half of 1977; extra items from these instruments were included so that cross-national comparisons might also later be made);

(v) the personal interests of team members regarding aspects of SBCD.

As a result of this item development, trial forms of three questionnaires were prepared, designated as:

Form A: Curriculum Action Project Survey Questionnaire (Teachers);
Form B: Curriculum Action Project Survey Questionnaire (Department Heads);
Form C: Curriculum Action Project Survey Questionnaire (Principals).

(Copies of these questionnaires are included as Appendix A2).

The study was essentially exploratory, seeking to map a field with few previously-identified parameters. The questionnaires were therefore deliberately wide-ranging. Trial forms of the questionnaires were first administered in a pilot study to groups of teachers, department heads, and principals from Sydney metropolitan schools who were known to the research team and who expressed willingness to assist in this way. These respondents attended Macquarie University for a four-hour session at which the members of the research team were present. After completion of the questionnaires, the participants were asked also to comment on the instruments generally and to identify unclear items. This discussion was recorded on audiotape using three microphones, a mixer and a tape recorder, and later transcribed. Members of the research team also noted suggested changes to wording of items. Each of the questionnaire forms was then revised. Some trialled items were omitted to reduce the questionnaire length, and others as a result of adverse comments of pilot study respondents.

(c) Sampling

For the survey, the original proposal was that a stratified random sample (probability proportional to size) comprising twenty schools in each state and ten in the-then two territories would be drawn for CAP by the Survey Section of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). ACER also drew a second stratified random sample of schools as substitutes for schools which declined to participate. When the University of Queensland and Macquarie

University teams decided to conduct complementary surveys, the substitute schools became the Macquarie University CAP sample. However, as the survey progressed, it became obvious that many of the schools in the substitute sample had already been contacted by the University of Queensland and had agreed to be part of the Queensland project. A further random stratified sample was then drawn for the Macquarie University CAP team by ACER to replace the schools eroded from the sample.

For Education Department schools, permission was sought and readily received from each State and Territory Director-General of Education. For non-Departmental schools, no parallel authorities existed. The schools sampled by ACER were invited to participate, and principals were requested to supply lists of names of staff, indicating the names of those teaching classes at Years 7-10 levels and designating also the names of department heads.

From these lists, the names of ten teachers and three department heads were randomly selected from each school agreeing to participate. The principal, three department heads and ten teachers were then each sent a questionnaire together with a personalised letter inviting each to participate by completing detailed questionnaires, which trials indicated would take between one and two hours to complete. Each page of each questionnaire was numbered with the coded number of the respondent to facilitate later analyses.

The survey was therefore based on a stratified random sample of schools and a random sample of teachers and department heads who taught in Years 7-10 in these schools. Each principal was also invited to participate. When a school was later selected for ethnographic study, it was added also to the survey sample. Subsequent analyses showed that the resultant samples appear representative of the Australian teaching staff on several criteria (see Appendix A3).

Several methods were adopted in an attempt to bolster response rates and encourage invitees to accept invitations to participate in this nationwide CAP survey. A media campaign was mounted throughout Australia to highlight the potential importance of the findings. A specially-prepared media release was mailed to press, radio and television outlets in capital cities and in catchment areas of selected schools (see Appendix A 4). Principals of each participating school were requested by letter to find released time for invitees or to otherwise compensate participants for their time involvement where this was feasible (see Appendix A 4). Teachers in a parallel study in the United States of America (the Study of Schooling) were paid honoraria on the return of completed questionnaires, but the substantially lesser funding of the CAP did not permit even a consideration of this possibility.

The response rates to invitations to participate in this study from schools and school staffs are depicted in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. The data in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 represent a potentially rich reservoir for hypotheses and speculations. The lower response rates in the two Territories is partly attributable to attrition of the sample by the concurrent study of the University of Queensland.

Principals who did not respond to the initial invitation to complete a CAP questionnaire (Form C) were subsequently sent a brief questionnaire in April 1978 seeking demographic data about their schools (see Appendix A.5). An additional 27 responses were obtained as a result of this follow-up, so that complete descriptive data were available for 98 per cent of participating schools.

Table 3.1: Response Rate of Schools Participating in Study, by State

STATES	Base Number of Schools	Number of School Acceptances for Participation	
		N	Percentage of Original Base Number
N.S.W.	20	16	80%
Victoria	20	17	85%
Queensland	20	13	65%
South Australia	20	17	85%
Western Australia	18	12	67%
Tasmania	19	17	89%
TOTALS	117	*92	84%

Table 3.2: Response Rate of Respondents, by State and Responsibilities

STATES	Number of Invitations Mailed			Number of principals providing information about participating school	Number of Respondents to Questionnaires (Percentage of Invitations mailed)		
	Principals	Heads of Dept.	Teachers		Principals	Heads of Dept.	Teachers
N.S.W.	16	48	160	15 (94%)	9 (56%)	37 (77%)	56 (39%)
Victoria	17	51	170	17 (100%)	12 (71%)	17 (33%)	63 (37%)
Queensland	13	39	130	12 (92%)	10 (77%)	17 (44%)	37 (28%)
South Australia	17	51	170	16 (94%)	13 (76%)	23 (45%)	74 (44%)
Western Australia	12	36	120	12 (100%)	10 (83%)	20 (56%)	56 (47%)
Tasmania	17	51	170	16 (94%)	13 (76%)	25 (49%)	60 (35%)
TOTALS	92	276	920	*88 (96%)	67 (73%)	139 (50%)	346 (38%)
		1288				552 (43%)	

*(Footnote: A number of schools in the ACT and Northern Territory were subsequently invited to participate. Four ACT and two NT schools accepted. These schools provided additional data from 3 Principals, 5 Department Heads and 26 Teachers, providing a total sample of 586 respondents representing 98 schools throughout Australia).

In summary, data analyses reported herein are based on responses from 98 per cent of a random sample of Australian secondary schools (probability proportional to size). Participating schools are representative of Australian schools for school size, sex distribution, location and type (government/non-government/independent). Respondent teachers from those schools exhibit characteristics of age and teaching experience closely resembling the total teacher population in Government Schools throughout Australia. In addition, the size of schools in which the respondents taught were representative of all Australian schools, as reported by the Schools Commission Report (1974) (see Appendix A3).

(d) Data Collection

Separate forms of questionnaire were developed for the three groups of invitees. However, they contained many items common to all three forms. The appropriate questionnaire (Form A (white) for teachers, Form B (yellow) for department heads, and Form C (pink) for principals) was included with each invitation, together with a reply-paid envelope for facilitating individual return of the completed questionnaire rather than through the school principal. The items within the questionnaires were traceable to particular respondents via a number assigned to each respondent and stamped on each page of that respondent's questionnaire, but respondents were assured of anonymity. Invitees were requested to respond by a designated date three weeks from the mailing date to each invitee. They were assured of the confidentiality of the data, and promised that feedback would be provided to all participating schools.

(e) Data Analyses

The first part of the questionnaires comprised structured, multiple-choice items. Coding of responses for these questions followed standard procedures. Four open-ended items were included at the end of the questionnaires. Each of these items was analysed by a separate researcher. Each of these researchers followed similar steps in data analyses, including:

- listing all responses by respondent,
- conceptualising initial categories for coding data,
- trialling these categories,
- re-conceptualising to revise data categories and develop operational definitions,
- classifying responses, and
- analysing responses, using descriptive and multivariate statistical procedures, as appropriate.

Data from multiple-choice items were analysed using the "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" (SPSS) (Nie et al, 1970). This "package" was used in the first instance to produce descriptive data. Because CAP has obtained data on areas where there has been little Australian research to date, many of the results are reported in detail. This should facilitate the availability of data to a variety of audiences each with their specific research interests. Multivariate analyses were also carried out on the data using such techniques as factor, correlation, and regression analyses.

For analysing some responses, schools were grouped into three categories according to size. Size was defined as number of students enrolled, as follows:

. small schools:	less than 600 students (33 per cent of the sample);
. medium-sized schools:	600 to less than 1,000 students (39 per cent);
. large schools:	1,000 or more students (24 per cent).

For four per cent of schools, principals did not provide this information.

Data were analysed using the following procedures in the order listed:

(i) cross-tabulations of all items by respondent type;

(ii) cross-tabulations for selected questions by

- school size,
- sex of respondent,
- location of school (city/country),
- type of school,
- state, and
- subject area (Science, Art, Technical);

(iii) factor analyses of a measure of school climate using the "climate" items for respondent type (because of differences in responses between the three types of respondents shown up in (i) above);

(iv) an analysis of items which used a Likert scale aimed at creating an index of school climate as perceived by the respondents;

(v) multiple regression to develop equations in an attempt to identify variables associated with attitudes to SBCD;

(vi) selected case studies of all responses from some schools for some items, to create and compare school profiles regarding SBCD;

(vii) comparisons of responses from schools in the lowest and highest 20% socio-economic status (as rated by principals) in relation to some aspects of SBCD (for example, satisfaction with, perceived major problems and most severe problem in, SBCD; proportion of students completing Year 10, retention rates beyond Year 10; proportion of special groups of students, size and location of school).

These procedures were used in an attempt to create indices for some variables which could then be used in regression equations to explore possible relationships between various phenomena of SBCD.

(f) Assumptions related to the survey

In the development of the questionnaires, assumptions were made that:

(i) questionnaire surveys in general are valid and reliable data-gathering strategies;

(ii) the specific questionnaires would be interpreted consistently by both researchers and respondents; open-ended questions were included partly to explore the extent to which these assumptions were justified;

(iii) because SBCD was a largely unmapped field, it was inappropriate to develop pre-determined hypotheses;

(iv) the nature of the questionnaire items was sufficiently broad to tap comprehensively the crucial questions relevant to SBCD and to provide data for establishing the parameters of this phenomenon;

(v) data mostly represent self-reports by respondents of their perceptions of events and people, and so are inevitably influenced by the insights and values of respondents;

(vi) data are related specifically to curriculum decision-making (formal and informal); data were not specifically sought concerning other aspects of classroom activities;

(vii) the research team would not make judgmental statements about the data, but rather that their role would be to provide data about the current reality of SBCD as perceived by staff within schools.

(viii) the sampling procedures adopted on our behalf by ACER would result in data generalisable to Australian secondary schools.

(Subsequent analyses indicated that respondents were representative of the Australian teaching population on several variables.)

(g) Feedback to Participating Schools

When schools and their staffs were invited to participate in the CAP study, they were informed that a report of the overall findings would be sent to each school at the conclusion of the data analyses. This decision was based on judgments about the responsibility of researchers to feed back the results of their investigations to those co-operating in a study. It was recognised that additional dissemination of results of research projects funded by ERDC is undertaken by a special ERDC Sub-committee, and the expenditure involved in reporting to participating schools was not provided by the funding authority. The resultant "Report to Participating Schools" is included as Appendix A6.1.School staffs were invited to indicate the use made of this report and to request further more detailed information if they so desired (see Appendix A6.2).A fuller report was made available to those staffs who made such a request by ticking a space on a proforma provided. This was an additional feature of the CAP study and an expression of our interest in studying the responses of schools to our providing a particular type of feedback (see Appendix A.6.3).

2. ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY: LITERATURE REVIEW

Before introducing the reader to the ethnographic study conducted by the CAP team at Eucalypt Grove High School, a literature review of the current status of ethnographic methodology is to be presented in the sections which follow.

(a) Selection of Methodology

Ethnographic studies are appropriately used where researchers are endeavouring to investigate a setting or phenomenon which has not previously been studied or is inadequately mapped. In these circumstances, the testing of hypotheses is considered premature (see Becker, 1958; Riley, 1963; Becker, 1968:28; Evan, 1971; Geerty, 1975; Bronfenbrenner, 1976). The basic purpose of such studies is to describe a complex social context, and not to attempt to predict cause-and-effect relationships. These methods have been used in the study of societies, sub-cultural groups, and complex organisations within society, including schools (see Gross et al, 1971; Sarason, 1971).

(b) Purpose of Using the Ethnographic Methodology

A major purpose of using participant-observation techniques in ethnographic approaches is to prepare an analytic description of a complex social situation which

(i) employs the concepts, propositions, and empirical generalizations of a body of scientific theory as the basic guides in analysis and reporting,

(ii) employs thorough and systematic collection, classification and reporting of facts, and

(iii) generates new empirical generalizations (and perhaps concepts and propositions as well) based on these data (McCall and Simmons, 1969:3).

From the outset, team members in the Curriculum Action Project sought to develop an analytic description of the complex social situation at Eucalypt Grove High School.

(c) Observation of Phenomena

The observer in an ethnographic study assumes that the parameters of the situation are not known in advance (McCall and Simmons, 1969) and therefore sampling procedures are typically not executed in advance of data collection. Sampling for ethnographic studies is usually of at least three complementary types used to give a more complete description of the setting being studied, for example

(i) *quota* sampling of examples of each category of phenomena identified,

(ii) *snowball* sampling, that is following up leads from informants in the setting, and

(iii) *searching for exceptions* to emerging hypotheses formulated as the study progresses (McCall and Simmons, 1969).

The Curriculum Action Project plan used each of these types as the research unfolded.

(d) Data Collection Methods used in Ethnographic Studies

Three major stages have been designated in ethnographic methodology as conducted in the field by the participant-observer methodology, namely

(1) discovery

(2) description, and

(3) explanation (see Grierson, 1976).

Techniques of data collection usually include

- use of more than one instance as evidence of a phenomenon,
- making notes of details of the setting in which an event occurs, that is participants, objects and materials used, time, data, location,
- recording the stimulus for the event or phenomenon, and the sequence over time,
- keeping a journal or diary notes about comments made by participants, events, conversations with participants about their perceptions and interpretations, and behavioural patterns over time,
- keeping of participation charts, checklists, rating scales, tallies of frequency of observed phenomena,
- conducting unstructured and structured interviews, and
- collecting documents (see Becker, 1958; Smith and Geoffrey, 1968; Evan, 1971; Cusick, 1973; Cartwright and Cartwright, 1974; Grierson, 1976).

Data collection methods are often trialled in the situation under study with a small sample and/or over a relatively short time span, in order to develop the most appropriate approach. Field notes or diaries typically record rich detail because of the open-ended nature of the method and the lack of initial clarity about the extent of the phenomena likely to become relevant.

Regular and free-flowing interactions at meetings of the members of the CAP team helped to ensure that all of the data collection techniques described above were regularly utilised.

(e) Data Analyses of Ethnographic Data

Data analyses from participant-observation methods are generally carried out as the data are collected, in order to give direction to further study. One set of stages of analysis during the field study was designated by Becker as:

(i) selection and definition of problems, concepts, indices,
(ii) checking frequency of distribution of phenomena,
(iii) development of models to describe the data, and
(iv) presentation of evidence and proof, through checking and revising the models against further data (see Becker, 1958)

followed by further analysis after withdrawal from the field in order to build a more accurate and complete description and/or model(s) to explain the complexity of the situation.

The progressive modification of the CAP directions as data were analysed helped to ensure that data relevant to the Eucalypt Grove High School staff was continuously gathered.

(f) Reporting Data

Data from such participant-observation methods are normally reported using unsophisticated statistical methods. They need to be reported in enough detail, illustrated by anecdotal details, to enable the reader to judge the validity of the reported conclusion. The regular CAP team meetings helped to provide a check upon the adequacy of reporting of each researcher.

(g) Reliability and Validity

Becker (1958) suggested that data from participant-observation methods should be supported by details about

(i) the credibility of informants, and their status in the group being studied;

(ii) the proportion of volunteered compared with statements sought from informants; and

(iii) the amount of agreement between observations made by the observer, by individual informants, and by the whole group as reported in their perceptions.

He considered that these data provided checks on the reliability of the evidence cited. Bruyn (1958) identified six checks of reliability, namely

(iv) the length of time spent in the setting,

(v) the degree of involvement in the geographic situation (place),

(vi) the number of social groups and roles in which the observer has participated (social circumstance),

(vii) the degree to which participants and observer share a common language,

(viii) the extent of participation in private social activities (intimacy), and

(ix) the degree of consensus discernible between informants about the meanings of events.

Grierson (1976) added a further test related to the reported signs of distortion which might disrupt or distort the interpretations of the observer.

Bronfenbrenner (1976) identified 15 tests of validity for ecological research, some of which are:

- the setting should be one which would occur in real life; time, place roles and activities must "approximate" real life happenings for ecological validity;
- the intrusion into the setting should be kept to a minimum in order to maintain the ecological integrity of the setting;
- contexts must occur naturally in the subculture of the participants, to give contextual validity;
- the participants' views of the situation must be obtained, in order to maintain phenomenological validity;
- equal attention must be paid to the properties of both the physical setting and the social structure, and their relationships to each other, to enable setting analysis;
- reciprocal effects of the setting and the participants should be taken into account;

- the experimenter needs to recognise the *totality of the functional social system* in the setting;
- both *direct and indirect* effects of the system and subsystems need to be recognised;
- possible *subsystems and and higher-order effects* within settings need to be analysed;
- the setting needs to be conceptualised and analysed in *systems terms*;
- *interaction between settings* should be analysed.

Ethnographic studies have a number of distinct advantages for research into contexts or problems where data and understandings are scarce. The participant-observation method gives time to ease into a situation at an appropriate pace for the establishment of rapport, so assisting in obtaining more accurate, in-depth material. The observer can obtain an overview of the situation and develop more relevant questions for use in interviewing participants. Data categories can be modified as data are collected. "Latent" aspects of the setting can be identified and appropriate informants identified. As data are collected, the research can be redirected by continuous data analyses to develop a more appropriate approach. Contrasting evidence can be obtained. The ideal and the actual phenomena can be compared.

In summary, the use of the ethnographic methodology can produce in-depth data. The reporting of such data can give the reader access to the situation and the methodology in great detail and thus provide a valuable complement to data available from experimental and survey research (see Becker, 1958; Riley, 1963; Eichorn and Dean, 1969; Cusick, 1973; Wolcott, 1975 for more detail). The CAP team decided to use the powerful twin methodologies of ethnography and survey techniques.

(i) Dilemmas in Ethnographic Studies

However, an ethnographic approach also involves dilemmas which have to be acknowledged and overcome if possible (see Schwartz and Schwartz, 1955; Becker, 1958; Riley, 1963; Dean et al, 1969; Sarason, 1971; Evan, 1971; Cusick, 1973; Heller et al, 1977).

Adequately-developed procedures and techniques for data analysis have not been fully developed, and are not amenable to generalisation beyond the setting-specific context. Less use is made of measurement than in experimental research, leading to purported "objectivity" problems. The rich data are difficult to analyse, time-consuming in their accumulation and reporting.

It is difficult to formulate the problems and recognise their complexities until time has been spent in the actual setting. The methodology therefore needs to be modified as the study progresses. It may also be difficult for the observer to remain uninvolved with the viewpoints and feelings of participants. In addition, the observer is part of and inevitably alters the situation, thus influencing the data.

However, where the case can be considered sufficiently typical of a particular type of social setting, and where that setting is adequately and accurately described so that phenomena can be identified, the ethnographic case study is considered appropriate when mapping a new field, generating hypotheses to explain a phenomenon, or studying a single school in depth.

Another aspect of ethnography is the effect upon the ethnographer. Ethnographic studies generate numerous open-ended opportunities for follow-up. However, time and resources are inevitably limited, and consequently ethnographers are likely to experience psychological stresses in coping with an ever-expanding data reservoir (Zigarmi & Zigarmi, 1980). Thus a further dilemma arises from the fact that decisions must be made concerning potentially interesting leads in relation to possible data overload.

3. ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF EUCALYPT GROVE HIGH SCHOOL

Having now reviewed the role of ethnographic methodology in general, let us now turn to review the methodology used by CAP researchers in the ethnographic study of one school, namely Eucalypt Grove High School.

(a) Purposes of Ethnographic Study in the Curriculum Action Project

The purpose of the ethnographic study was to collect descriptive data about curriculum decision-making in one secondary school in order

(i) to provide a basis for critical evaluation of responses to the national survey from the CAP questionnaires;

(ii) to contribute to mapping the field of curriculum decision-making as it occurs in Australian secondary schools, with particular reference to Years 7-10;

(iii) to assist in generating hypotheses, generalisations and models to explain the phenomena of curriculum decision-making; and

(iv) to develop a methodology for investigating curriculum decision-making in a school.

(b) Entering the Field

An initial intention during the formation of research plans in 1976 had been to conduct case studies of at least two secondary schools located in areas of contrasting socioeconomic circumstances. This view had the encouragement of the Director-General of Education for the state.

The CAP team had made initial contact with the principal of a school late in 1976 with a suggestion that the school might be used as one case study in the CAP if the project proceeded. A number of factors influenced the selection of this school. Amongst these were its

- geographic convenience;
- the fact that there had been earlier contact with the school in a study by one of the co-investigators of student creativity;
- the principal had a reputation for being cooperative in research and development activities;
- the school seemed to exhibit some aspects of being "innovative".

In July 1977, the CAP research team selected this secondary school in the Sydney Metropolitan area as the setting in which a participant-observer study might be undertaken. For purposes of providing anonymity within the CAP, the school was designated Eucalypt Grove High School (EGHS) from the outset. The principal of EGHS was then approached about the school's participation and a meeting with staff was requested by the CAP team. The principal responded initially by arranging a meeting between the "school executive" (comprising 17 persons) and the CAP team (then comprising six persons). At this meeting, the CAP team explained the proposed purposes and approaches of the study, answered questions posed by the staff, and obtained consensus among the executive for the study to proceed. At the further request of the CAP team, a full staff meeting was then held and agreement for the study to proceed was obtained. In this way, some probable roles of the research team were clarified. Prior to the observers entering the field, the CAP questionnaire was distributed to EGHS staff as a means of obtaining data about staff perceptions. After the EGHS study was underway and the scope of the case studies was thus explored more fully, it was realised that funding, time and experienced personnel would be inadequate to conduct studies in more than one school. The decision was then made to conduct only one case study instead of two or more. An additional factor was the substantial travelling time required for data collection purposes, especially where a case study school was geographically remote.

(c) The Research Team

At various stages of the research, a total of seven researchers participated in the CAP ethnographic study. Four people worked during 1977 and six in 1978. This team, consisting of three males and four females, ranged in age from 24 to 47 years. One of these had a child at EGHS. The value of the varied skills and experience brought to the team by the various individuals is illustrated in the following profiles:

- Mick Bezzina: a former teaching brother; completed a BA Dip.Ed. at Macquarie University in 1977; organisational and observational skills; experienced in working with people; had conducted inservice and youth leadership training courses; "coordinator".

- Adrian Bradley: a former secondary school teacher in private progressive, catholic, and technical schools; B.Econ. (Monash), T.S.T.C., B.A. (Psych.) (Macquarie); has conducted gestalt groups; visiting lecturer at school counsellor training courses; had conducted inservice for school counsellors; ability to communicate with students; "conceptualiser".

- David Cohen: a former science teacher and teachers' college lecturer, with extensive previous experience of curriculum research in primary and secondary schools; co-founder of several parent-involvement alternative schools; B.Sc., B.Ed., Ph.D.; parent; author; qualified psychologist; ability to initiate contacts with people; good memory of names; concerned about kids and schools as providing enjoyable environments; very committed to school-based research and development and to the team approach; "alternatives generator".

- Marelle Harrison: a former teacher in infants and hospital schools; tertiary teacher; experienced in adult and inservice education, and in curriculum development; B.A. (Hons) (Macq.); Ph.D. candidate (Macq.); parent; had undertaken an ethnographic study of curriculum decision-making in a primary school; skill in human relations training and working in teams in various settings; ability to assist others to work together; memory "like a tape recorder", commitment to ethnographic method and process consultancy; "synthesiser".

- Sue Josephsen: former secondary school teacher and zoo education officer; B.Sc. (Syd), Dip.Ed. (Syd); Dip.Envir.Stud. (Macq.), undertaking MA studies in education at Macquarie; experience in human relations training; experience in curriculum development and inservice education of teachers; ability to help people clarify meanings; skill in communicating clearly without jargon; "crap detector".
- Rieke Nash: parent; B.A. (Hons) (Macq.); former market researcher, and programmer; tutor in maths; skilled in educational research methodology; had studied the roles of parents in schools; ability to analyse critically; ability to link the national survey results with the ethnographic data, and to help the team with an overview of the project; "analyser".
- Dianna Williams: former pre-school and infants teacher; Dip KTC, B.A. (Macq); tertiary lecturer; poet; parent; experienced in group work in curriculum development; experience in adult education; had been involved with parents and citizens group; experience in human relations training; ability to keep comprehensive records and organise data records; training and experience in observation skills; "coordinator".

The CAP team were nicknamed CRAP or CARP by EGHS staff!

(d) Sampling of Ethnographic Phenomena at EGHS

The sampling used in the CAP ethnographic study may be considered from two different viewpoints, namely:

- characteristics of EGHS as "the setting";
- the bases upon which we decided which phenomena to observe within the school.

(i) The setting

Eucalypt Grove High School is an Education Department coeducational metropolitan secondary school in a middle class area. During the period of the Curriculum Action Project (1977-1978), it had a staff of the principal, deputy principal, 12 department heads, and 58 other teachers. The number of students enrolled was 1200, with almost equal numbers of the two sexes. There was one full-time and one part-time clerical assistant and three additional secretarial assistants who provided typing and duplicating facilities for the staff. There were four laboratory assistants, two library assistants, one part-time school counsellor, and two teaching aides. There was one "general assistant" whose duties included attention to the buildings and grounds of the school. A team of cleaners employed and controlled by the Public Works Department was responsible for school cleaning.

The school was opened in the early 60's. There were separate buildings, widely dispersed. One of these was the administrative block located near the drive into the school. In this block were located the offices of the principal, deputy principal, school counsellor (part-time) and office staff. There were also separate staff rooms, some of which were for subject department staff. These were not connected by an intercom system. Likewise the staff common room was not linked by telephone to these other areas. A "time book" for teachers was located on a desk in the corridor, and daily memoranda were attached to this book, the expectation being that teachers would observe this daily. Each teacher had a "slot" within a set of pigeonholes in which secretarial staff placed any mail and circulars as they arrived. There was a public address system to each classroom controlled from the deputy principal's office and an "intercom system" to various other key points of the school. The two-storeyed classroom blocks were in the form of a ⊔, which was capped by the administration block, and enclosed a playground area. There was an assembly hall which could accommodate all students.

Eucalypt Grove High School was approximately 15 years old, but it was attractive, mainly because of its setting. The principal commented that the physical appearance of the school had "much to recommend it - we're lucky from this point of view. There are beautiful grounds with a lot of green open space and lots of facilities - assembly hall, good labs, and four tennis courts." It also had a large bitumenised playground area. Rooms were spacious, most classrooms contained single desks, but there was very little carpeting anywhere in the school.

Eucalypt Grove High School regularly cooperated with a number of universities and CAEs in their teacher education programs. Inservice courses have taken place intermittently, and consultants visited the school periodically.

In November 1975, in a letter to one of the researchers, the principal reported Eucalypt Grove High School as a

> "busy happy place with lots of things going on. The majority of time is still spent on basics - Maths, Science, English, Social Sciences, and a wide variety of other subjects, and lots of extracurricular activities, such as drama, annual musicals (such as Camelot and Sound of Music). There is debating, and the Duke of Edinburgh awards for self-reliability. There are always kids involved in photography and journalism and the school magazine."
>
> "We try to involve the community. As well as the active P & C, there is community involvement in the junior science curriculum, and parents are active in the Library - in cataloguing, repair work and general aid. Some women have never missed a Thursday in years."
>
> "The other thing is quite a lot of effort on school curriculum developments - in the craft area, senior English, Science, Maths - I suppose they do it everywhere. One of the best things is the P.D. (=personal development) program, careers education and the work experience program."
>
> "As for the sort of results we get, we do very well in HSC. We had one boy in the top 20 in the State. We also do well in sporting achievements."
>
> "I think it's important that we run this school with few rules - and rely on the kids' commonsense. I think it's running fairly well."
>
> "I suggest you get the views of Les Dewie - he has watched the school as an experienced casual teacher, as we have tried to move it away from being an authoritarian school, towards where we rely on kids to be reliable and commonsensical. I think the kids are pretty good, although I complain like mad about them."

The Eucalypt Grove High School principal had been requested to supply any information about the school which might help to explain why the school contained a number of "high creative" students, as shown in a national study of creativity then being conducted independently by one of the CAP co-investigators. Other comments made by the principal in 1975 included the following:

> "Curriculum
>
> I think that at Eucalypt Grove High School by implementing innovation and encouraging individual efforts we are trying to make the environment more creative. I myself as its Principal am interested in innovation and give every encouragement to members of staff or students who have new ideas.
>
> We have made changes in both the Senior and Junior Curriculum. We are offering in both the Junior and Senior School a wide Choice of Subjects and in Form 8 in particular we are allowing students to sample six electives over the year instead of requiring them to select two electives that they must hold for the following 3 years. In the Senior School we are offering 8 Other Approved Studies - Computer Programming, Participatory Drama, Introduction to Psychology, Journalism, Principles of Business Administration, Automotive Maintenance, Advanced Bookwork, Practical Synthetic Music. In Craft we offer as wide a range as possible of such things as Weaving, Photography, Puppet making in addition to the usual Cooking, Woodwork etc. In the Industrial Arts area we also do such things as making guitars, building fibre glass canoes, toboggans and the like.
>
> Students produce a school newspaper and will shortly bring out the first real student-produced Year book. By this I mean that they are doing all the copy writing, selling of advertising, posting up etc. etc. and the photography ....
>
> We encourage extra curricular activities so that there is a constant series of excursion field study trips and the like. Vacation trips are organised regularly e.g. to Indonesia, Barrier Reef, etc.
>
> There is a very decided interest in debating and dramatic activities. Every year there is a student organised debating competition involving many of the neighbouring schools; this year the Journalism students organised and held a day long workshop for schools round about that were interested in starting a school newspaper and much of the work done by the Dramatic Society is student directed. This year Senior students in the school were encouraged to work with Form 7 students in a wide range of activities, from Environmental studies that included practical work in our own piece of natural bushland to bushcraft, cartoon drawing, enamelling, drama, fishing rod making etc. As a result of these activities the whole of the canteen area was painted with a modern bright mural and the drama children presented a play night. (Clubs are encouraged and new ones that have developed are a computer club, a bridge club, a model aeroplane club and the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme is also operating with 3 students well into the winning of Gold Awards.)

We have a library that is a real resource centre and we have spent a great deal of our funds in the last 2 years on all kinds of A.V. equipment - television in both black and white and colour coaxial cabling through much of the school, cassettes, tape recorders, video camera and the like. We are just about to introduce a course for students on the media which will include work with all these kinds of aids. We converted one part of the library into a T.V. theatrette and are looking now at the possibility of converting another area into a studio for film work.

We have not only a prefect corps but also a student council through which student opinion can be expressed. After a shaky beginning, the Council shows signs of being quite an effective body. Many Senior students are involved in the running of regular Rock and Roll Dances and Junior Dances, and although there are problems associated with both of them this is also a valuable experience for everyone.

We have varied our timetabling arrangements - but it is still not flexible enough - we have converted to a 6 x 52 minute period day and are now, for 1976, timetabling over a 10 day cycle.

STAFFING

I think we are lucky to have a good deal of interest and talent on the Staff. However this is the second school of which I have been principal and in both I found extraordinary range of talent. Unfortunately, teachers often have no opportunity for using this.

At Eucalypt Grove High School we have members of staff who are expert in the field of art, music, drama, debating, journalism, crafts. I do not think that this is by any means very different from other staffs. We do have however a number of good experienced teachers and we have at least two with overseas experience who have brought new ideas into the school.

SCHOOL LOCATION

Eucalypt Grove High School draws its population of some 1976 from a rather varied socio-economic area. There is a great variation in its students and they range in every sense from the privileged to the disadvantaged. They include a number of migrant children so that a Migrant English teacher is employed and there are in the School some General Activity Children who are slow learners, some Deaf Children, and these past 2 years we have had one totally blind girl. The School is set in beautiful grounds with some playing fields. Apart from the use of local swimming pools and other sports areas no use is made of Community facilities. The Community makes some use of the school - an ethnic group holds language classes on Saturday afternoons, it is used every night as an Evening College and by various bodies in vacation times for recreation. The school is, however, very centrally situated.

The school facilities are widely used for meetings and conventions and the Assembly Hall is often used for concerts, dances, or dramatic performances by outside bodies.

FACILITIES

Eucalypt Grove High, apart from a really good library and modern laboratories, is served by very ordinary specialised teaching areas. There is constant use of all rooms, e.g., English classes in labs or drawing rooms, and if accommodation was not so tight, I feel much more could be done.

OTHER SCHOOL FEATURES

I think that there are some parents and citizens who are very interested in the school and some who are actively involved, but not nearly as many as I would like. Some parents belong to the P & C, some help in the Canteen, a group of mothers work consistently in the Library and a few help with slow readers. Senior Students this year have been encouraged to involve themselves in some Community work and they have worked either in the Community helping disadvantaged persons, e.g., the elderly, the ill, the blind or they have worked in nearby primary schools.

The school, as I have said, is about 1260 in population. Classes are often of the maximum size and there is generally a good deal of pressure on the school. In Year 7 there has been a move towards non streaming of students and the appearance of mixed ability classes. In 1975 7A was graded out, there was a General Activities Class, but all the others were parallel classes of mixed abilities. From then on classes in each subject tend to be, wherever numbers allow, ability graded. "

Another set of perceptions concerning Eucalypt Grove High School was obtained acting on the suggestion of the Eucalypt Grove High School principal. The views of Ms Connie Bestel were sought. Ms Bestel was a retired school principal who had also been a relieving teacher over several years.

Observations at Eucalypt Grove High School, by Connie Bestel (Relieving Teacher)

"Having been an interested spectator for 3-4 years I can vouch for the metamorphosis that has taken place. I can see the result of a long-term plan to update a school so that it represents an educational agency eminently suited to cater for the needs of the late 1970's and therefore very different in philosophy, planning and practice from what it was previously . . . and all this development seems to have had its genesis within the school.

"The philosophy behind it all has not been radical but rather what I'd like to call liberalised conservatism, taking conservatism to mean the retention of all proven worth and liberalism the readiness to discard the obsolete, the unnecessary, the that-which-doesn't-fit-in-any-more in today's world. Together with this has been the conviction that things should not just be talked about . . . they should be done.

"Change???? I don't like the term, so I'll substitute "Development". Development has

1. proceeded in an evolutionary manner, progressing slowly by systems that can live in the educational environment of yesterday, today, tomorrow.
2. been pupil oriented at all times.
3. been built on staff involvement.
4. been prepared to be swayed by the breezes of tomorrow's changed world.
5. been based on the principle of "that which is best for everybody".
6. provided for the ordinary fellow, not for elitism.
7. proceeded as the school climate is ready to receive it.
8. been directed forward at all times.
9. functioned along "open" lines: staff, pupils, parents, community have all been aware of it, and have been involved in it.

I've had to admire the "liberalised conservatism" that ensured there would be no "going overboard" for any hare-brained scheme fostered by any inexperienced radical education Messiah who claimed to have the universal anodyne for all educational pains, while at the same time being prepared to look at, consider, test and finally try those aspects of any practicable scheme or innovation that might meet the needs of the situation and make a contribution to the ultimate good of students.

"The Principal's Role

The totality of educational wealth of staff is tapped according to needs; such wealth being either the wisdom of the experienced or the optimism and enthusiasm of the inexperienced. In all this, the Principal has piloted, advised, provided stimulus and impetus in thought and action, correlated ideas, encouraged experimentation, guided the rash, calmed the brash, and collected and balanced the contribution of each staff member.

"The Staff

I've seen the change . . . or rather the development . . . of the staff from a stage of unpreparedness to "do anything unusual" to one of readiness to accept responsibility for having a hand running the common ship, working out its destination, assisting in its piloting, ensuring it proceeds in the desired direction, sharing the difficulties and dangers, the discomforts and failures, and enjoying the successes and rewards of their own labours, . . . again a mirror of life.

"Students

"I've seen the gradual acceptance of responsibility and privileges of their new status; a realisation of their duality, an acceptance and realisation

> that I have seen change from an uninhibited and somewhat uncontrolled exhibitionism of 3-4 years ago to the present ready acceptance that privilege does beget responsibility.
>
> "I've seen them mature, and I often ask myself, "Where have all those baddies, those malcontents, those rebels, those trouble-makers gone?" And I have to answer myself by saying, "The new system, the Development has engulfed them".
>
> "In general, I see the school putting into operation theoretical hopes and aspirations . . . and finding them successful. I see the school using its staff as individuals and as a source of common knowledge, wisdom and endeavour. I see the school as an educational entity that has got up off its tail and done things. I enjoy seeing the school doing these things!!! May other schools follow suit!"

(ii) Description of Data Collection Procedures

As described earlier, it was decided that in 1977 (the first year of the Curriculum Action Project), the research team would limit their roles to being participant-observers. This, in retrospect, was designated as Phase 1 of the ethnographic study. In 1978, Phase 2 was begun, involving the CAP team as "process consultants". These two phases are described in the pages that follow.

Phase 1

The first phase of the study was conducted in 1977. This comprised a period of approximately six months of participant-observation. The four participant-observers visited EGHS on a total of 57 occasions, either singly, in pairs, threes or fours. These visits involved attendance at meetings including staff morning teas, executive meetings, Personal Development Day, Open Day, Parents & Citizens Meeting, Science staff all-day meeting, Social Science all-day meeting, and student welfare lunch-time meeting. There were also interviews with individual staff members, teaching department members and students. Data about visits and interviews are summarised in Tables 3.3 and 3.4 Some of the raw data is included in Appendix A7 as Tables

Table 3.3: Data collection procedures used in ethnographic study

	1977	1978
Observational Visits to School: Meetings	33	40
Other events	24	7
Whole staff meetings organised by CAP Team	2	4
Interviews with an individual	112	148
Interviews with a group	104	205
Documents collected	45	116

Table 3.4: Interviews with specific persons individually and in a group

	1977	1978
Principal	27	51
Deputy	18	22
Department Heads	110	169
Other staff	106	184
	255	426

Reports by the CAP team show that at least 40 of the 77 members (52 per cent of the teaching staff) had some close contact during the year with one or more members of the CAP team. Their conversations had been quoted or recorded in detail. Nine other members of the school staff, including office staff, library or laboratory assistants and trainee teachers, had also been interviewed. Of the 40 teachers mentioned, 16 were either Heads of Departments, Form Masters or Mistresses or Special Masters or Mistresses, (100 per cent of executive staff). Besides these 40 teachers and 9 other staff, 9 other teachers and 1 trainee teacher were named as having been seen or listened to at meetings, although no direct personal contact with a CAP team member was mentioned in CAP observational reports. Thus the CAP team obtained data from at least 64 per cent of the staff in some way.

Discussion with other members of staff was mentioned in CAP reports, but these teachers were not identifiable (e.g., "one male", "a second male", "another female", "a younger male staff member", "an English teacher").

Data showed that approximately 62% (37) of male staff members and 63% (49) of female staff members were either interviewed or seen and listened to in meetings by one or more members of the CAP team. Eight per cent (7) of the staff were interviewed more than 5 times while a further 5% (4) were recorded as being seen or listened to in meetings more than 5 times.

In some instances, CAP team members approached staff members or groups to interview them or observe an event. In others, staff members approached a CAP member to offer information or issue an invitation. For example, the field diary records of 22-6-77 stated that a CAP member was approached by a subject master

> "... who said that he had a spare period and would (the observer) care to come with him ..."

Thus, observational data were collected in a variety of ways about SBCD at EGHS in 1977. The CAP team recognised that it was impossible to observe all phenomena in the setting. Therefore the decision was made to concentrate upon sampling examples of several types of curriculum decision-making settings, namely

- meetings of the total staff;
- meetings of selected subject faculties;
- social gatherings; and
- informal meetings between staff members.

In addition, as data analyses were progressively conducted, the need was indicated to observe

- classroom events;
- sporting events;
- parent-teacher nights; and
- parents' and citizens' meetings.

The decision was taken to observe phenomena in three subject departments from science/maths, humanities, and non-academic subject areas. The CAP team chose to observe science (perceived as exam-oriented), social science (perceived as academic, non-exam oriented) and home science (perceived as non-academic) as the three faculties for in-depth study. In addition, two Macquarie University postgraduate students observed in both the maths and social science departments.

One of the other departments was visited on one occasion early in 1977. In-depth data were obtained on that occasion from the departmental head, but other teachers were not interviewed.

In addition, the CAP team followed up promising leads from observations and interviews in a "snowball sample", contacting individuals and groups who could give details about emerging matters of interest.

Where decision-making events were not observed, the CAP team endeavoured to collect informants' observations of such events reported in interviews. At CAP team meetings, interviews conducted were regularly checked against a list of total staff, partly as a means of monitoring the adequacy of sampling of participants' perceptions of SBCD.

In addition, 45 documents circulating within and from the school were collected. These are available for subsequent analyses.

In order to obtain data on student perceptions, a randomly-selected sample was drawn comprising 100 students from Years 7-10, representative of the total student population. A questionnaire (Green: Form D) was administered to 96 of these students who were present at school on the day concerned. An additional form of questionnaire (Blue: Form E) was distributed by mail to the parents of each of these 100 students, and a stamped addressed envelope was included with each for return of these questionnaires. The purpose was to sample parent perceptions of curriculum decision-making at Eucalypt Grove High School. Thirty-nine parents responded to these invitations to participate.

- Phase 2

At the beginning of 1978, the CAP team entered a new phase in the study. The team became "process consultants" to the staff in relation to SBCD. This consultancy and its methodology are described in detail in a subsequent section. The expressed intentions were to concentrate observations upon those events which could provide evidence about

- the way the CAP team worked with staff;
- the results, if any, of this consultancy; and
- the follow-up of some differing approaches to SBCD already identified in the school by data analyses undertaken at that point of time.

The CAP team therefore observed events related to

- individualistic decision-making;
- decision-making within subject departments;
- total staff decision-making;
- inter-disciplinary groups engaged in decision-making;
- parent group initiated decision-making; and
- executive group decision-making.

One hundred and forty-eight interviews were conducted with 32 different staff members (41.2 per cent of total teaching staff) on an individual basis, and 205 interviews were conducted with these same persons in a group setting. There were 51 separate occasions on which visits were made to the school by the CAP team or its members, and 116 documents were collected (see Tables 3.3 and 3.4).

Thus detailed observational and interview data were collected by CAP team members. Some researchers made brief notes during the observation and recorded observations in more detail from memory after the visit, using either long-hand or oral notes dictated onto a dictaphone. Others recorded verbatim notes during meetings or discussions. These notes were later typed with copies for distribution to each team member. A face paper summarising both the details of each visit and the set of field diary notes was appended to the file copy (see Appendix B). Data collected were recorded to differentiate between data obtained from

- observations of meetings or events; and
- interviews.

In addition, the documents collected were listed in the reports, and comments were made about issues or hunches needing to be followed up.

One interview was tape recorded. During one full-day subject department meeting, an observer recorded detailed notes of each matter discussed in sequence, information used, identity of each speaker, and decisions made for action.

Whereas documents were collected during 1977 from the office, in 1978, a mail pigeonhole for CAP was set aside to which the office staff and teaching staff placed copies of many of the documents circulated among teaching staff.

(e) Collection of Supplementary Data

In addition to the data obtained from observations and interviews (as described above), several supplementary approaches were used in the collection of data for the ethnographic study.

Structured instruments used in the case study school were

(i) the questionnaires as developed for and used in the national survey;

(ii) special forms of questionnaires prepared for parents (Blue: Form E) and students (Green: Form D);

(iii) special questionnaires developed to obtain staff perceptions about the consultancy (see Appendix C).

Staff questionnaires were completed anonymously and returned to the CAP team by means of a special box labelled for the purpose and placed in the staff common room. Student questionnaires were both administered and collected by members of the CAP team.

(f) Data Analyses

Data from questionnaires, observational and interview records (field diary notes), and documents were analysed. Some questionnaire items were summarised using descriptive statistics and verbatim summaries of open-ended responses, and these were reported to the EGHS staff at an end-of-year staff meeting held in December 1977 based upon a printed Research Report. Part of this report comprised an initial analysis of field diary notes about the three focusses of the study (what decisions? who made them? influences?). Early in 1978, the remainder of the CAP staff questionnaire items, and the parent and student questionnaire responses from EGHS were analysed. Data about

- decision type;
- decision-makers;
- decision-making style; and
- influences on decision-making

had been collected.

There was some unease in the CAP team that the findings may be rejected by experimental researchers who perceived that respectability arose from quantification. A consensus was reached by the CAP team to attempt to encode all data (including anecdotal reports and other largely qualitative data). A number of methods for categorising and analysing the relevant data were trialled in December 1977. (See Appendix B5 for a copy of the initial analysis system.) These were subsequently modified and eventually discarded as they lacked the qualities of mutual exclusivity of categories and comprehensiveness.

Subsequently, late in 1978, the team adapted for secondary schools a category system developed by Harrison (1978) for primary schools. This approach was devised to list individual decisions from field diary records and documents, and to identify for computer analysis

- week and term of documenting the decision;
- observer;
- decision type;
- decision-maker;
- decision-making style;
- initiator;
- information type used;
- implementation level;
- source of decision data; and
- influence on decision-making.

These categories and the classifications in each were operationally defined as agreed to by the team (see Appendix B6). A research assistant listed and coded all 1977 decisions. Two other researchers later re-checked coding from original records as a test of reliability. These categorical data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nie, 1975) for frequencies and cross-tabulations according to broad conceptual groupings. Original field diary records were also analysed to describe the methodology used and sampling procedures.

Field diary records from 1978 were then photocopied to provide a second set which could be dissected (by cutting and pasting) to facilitate the classification of influences on decision-making. After this process, the whole team worked together to group the categories conceptually. These records were then used to describe the case study setting and to illustrate the survey results.

In June 1979, 1977 field diary records were re-analysed using the cut-and-paste method of classification and the resultant sheets sorted by the whole team into broad categories. To describe EGHS as it was observed during 1977, the team then worked in two sub-groups, in each of which sub-groups was at least one person not in the 1977 team. This was done as a reliability check on the initial analyses reported to the school staff in December 1977. The analyses resulted in similar overall findings to those reported previously to the EGHS staff.

In this Chapter, the methodological procedures used in the two sets of strategies of the Curriculum Action Project have been reported separately as survey and ethnographic techniques. However, the results reported in Chapters IV to VIII clearly demonstrate the importance and significance of these techniques as sources of complementary sets of data for investigating this relatively untapped field of study, curriculum decision-making.

CHAPTER 1V

RESULTS: WHAT CURRICULUM DECISIONS WERE MADE IN SCHOOLS?

A key question explored in both survey and ethnographic studies was "What curriculum decisions were made in schools?" Survey items to tap answers to this question were based upon the concepts of

- objectives;
- teaching strategies, learning experiences, and their organisation;
- evaluation of learning outcomes.

In addition, survey data was sought from teachers and department heads concerning their perceptions of changes initiated during the last three years. An analysis is made of the ethnographic study observations from Eucalypt Grove High School, and student perceptions concerning the EGHS curriculum are reported.

These foci are discussed in turn in this Chapter.

1. OBJECTIVES

Many of the key writings in the field of curriculum studies which assume the rational or sequential model would suggest that statements of objectives should be prerequisite for all other curriculum decisions (for example Tyler, 1949, Taba, 1962, Cohen, 1974) about the other sets of curriculum elements. If this were so, one might expect that all respondents would perceive the existence of statements of objectives. Items in the Curriculum Action Project questionnaires were devised to tap perceptions about the existence and influences of statements of objectives within the school (from teachers and principals) and within subject departments (from heads of department).

(a) Existence of Statements of Objectives

In the nation-wide survey, teachers and principals were asked about the existence of statements of school objectives. Their responses are reported in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Perceptions of the Existence of Statements of School Objectives

Statements of objectives in the school	% of respondents (n = 440)
Do not exist	10
Exist in writing	71
Known but not written	19

Seventy-one per cent of these respondents reported that statements of objectives of their schools "exist in writing." In the ethnographic study, responses from staff of EGHS parallelled the national survey results, with 61 per cent of respondents (n=23) perceiving such statements to exist in writing. The two persons who were principals during the course of this ethnographic study perceived that such statements existed.

(b) Influences of Statements of Objectives

In the nation-wide survey, respondents were asked to indicate how much influence they considered that statements of objectives exerted upon a number of aspects of the school and its curriculum. In Table 4.2, responses of teachers and principals who stated that objectives had "lots" of influence are reported.

Table 4.2: Comparisons of Perceptions of Principals and Teachers Concerning Statements of Objectives Having "Lots" of Influence. (n = 440)

Aspects Influenced	Principals (n = 68) %	Teachers (n = 372) %
What students actually do	46	23
How students are assessed	40	25
The Overall Program	47	27
Discussions at staff meetings	25	20
P & C discussions	13	10
School rules	32	25

There were no discernible differences between the perceptions of the two respondent groups concerning the existence and origins of statements of school objectives. However, far higher percentages of principals perceived such statements as having "lots" of influence than did teachers, with respect to what students do, how students are assessed, and the overall program. For departmental decision-making, department heads responded in a similar fashion to principals. As can be seen in Table 4.2, statements of objectives were perceived to influence P & C discussions less than any other aspect listed. There was very little difference between responses from different states.

(c) Relative Emphases on Types of Objectives

Teachers and principals who participated in the nation-wide survey were asked to rate the emphasis placed upon various categories of objectives in their school. The resultant data are reported in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Percentages of Teachers and Principals and Their Perceptions of Emphases Placed Upon Various Types of School Objectives (n = 440)

	Heavy %	Some %	Little %	Nil %
Intellectual Development	42	48	9	1
Physical Development	28	59	12	1
Social Development	27	59	13	1
Development for Careers	26	58	15	1
Preparation for Exams	22	47	23	8
Development of Personality	19	56	23	2
Emotional Development	13	54	28	5
Development of Aesthetic Appreciation	10	51	35	4

The perceptions of respondents about the relative emphases of school objectives indicate that heaviest emphasis is placed on intellectual development of students, while aesthetic appreciation and emotional development are reported as attracting least emphases. EGHS data again were similar to the national survey results.

In general, differences in emphases on objectives between respondents from the various states were not great. It is noteworthy, however, that Queensland respondents (40 per cent compared with the national figure of 22 per cent) reported "preparation for exams" as having "heavy emphasis". Respondents from Tasmania and ACT (each 26 per cent) reported heavy emphasis on emotional development, and respondents from Tasmania (47 per cent) reported heavy emphasis on social development.

Staff and parent groups of EGHS both rated the emphasis placed by their school on the eight types of objectives in the same order as the respondents from the national survey.

Observations during the case study at EGHS indicated that greater emphasis was placed on intellectual than on aesthetic subjects within the actual curriculum. The time allocated to subject areas reflected this emphasis. For example, staff of music, art and home science areas, which might be perceived to emphasise aesthetic objectives, reported that they were unsuccessful in gaining either extra time and resources, in contrast to teachers of physical education and industrial arts. When the timetable was revised during 1978, periods lost by music were allocated to physical education.

Data from the parental survey at EGHS indicated that parents thought that heavy emphasis should be placed on "development for careers" (79 per cent), "intellectual development" (74 per cent) and "preparation for exams" (67 per cent). These parents considered that emphasis already placed on "physical development" matched almost exactly their ideals.

(d) Origin of Statements of Objectives

For those respondents for whom statements of objectives existed (i.e., 90% of schools), data were sought concerning the origin of these statements, and these are reported in Table 4.4. (This item was not asked of department heads).

Table 4.4: Origins of Statements of School Objectives as Perceived by Respondents, Teachers and Principals (n ≈ 325)

Same as stated for secondary education in the State	14%
Written by the school principal	15%
Written by the total staff	24%
Written by a small group of the staff	16%
Other/no response	31%

Less than one quarter of respondents perceived that the statements were "written by the total staff" of their schools. For within-subject-department decisions, 36 per cent of department heads perceived that written statements of objectives for their subject areas were written by department heads and 23 per cent of these heads perceived that the staff of their departments participated in writing objectives. Respondents from EGHS disagreed about the origin of statements of objectives.

Asked to report on changes or desired changes in their departments, 29.5 per cent of teachers and department heads indicated that changes in "new/modified objectives" had been initiated during the past three years and a further 17.6% would like to see changes in objectives initiated in their departments.

One might assume from this that observations and interviews in schools would indicate that decisions about objectives were being made by staff on a significant number of occasions. This emerging hypothesis from the national survey was testable in the context of the ethnographic study. Analyses of the data from observations and interviews at EGHS showed that EGHS staff rarely referred to written statements of objectives in their decision-making processes. Of the 1509 recorded decisions in 1977, only four (0.3 per cent) were categorised as being about objectives. One observer of a whole-day meeting of Social Science staff planning the 1978 curriculum noted that staff members only once (and briefly) examined a written statement of Social Science objectives as designated by the state Education Department. The comments of these staff members were interpreted as indicating that these statements were considered jargon and unhelpful in the formulation of their curriculum plans. Staff of the Music department conducted end-of-year tests of music concepts without having written their objectives. The reality of curriculum decision-making at EGHS was that curriculum planning neither proceeded from nor depended upon pre-existing statements of objectives.

Perhaps predictably, in terms of the above, data from a separate item in which department heads and teachers were asked to identify the major problem encountered in the school as they attempted to implement their planned programs, showed that 11.8 per cent of heads (n=144) and 14.5 per cent of teachers (n=372) perceived "ambiguity of objectives" as a major problem. By contrast, no principal (n=70) perceived this factor as a major problem.

2. TEACHING STRATEGIES, LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND THEIR ORGANISATION

A second set of curriculum elements occurring in the literature of curriculum and adopted for analyses purposes in CAP was learning experiences and their organisation. This was interpreted as including content, teaching/learning methods, curriculum materials, sequencing, scope and integration. Data were gathered in both survey and ethnographic studies concerning these elements.

Teachers and department heads were asked to indicate how often they used a variety of methods of teaching/learning in a particular class which they taught, designated in the questionnaire as the class which they "teach first in the week starting next Monday." Table 4.5 summarises their responses.

Table 4.5: Respondent Reports of Methods of Teaching/Learning in Designated Classes. (n = 516)

	"Always or most of the time" or "Often" %	"Not very often" or "Never" %
Whole class lesson	79.1	20.9
Whole class discussion	53.9	46.1
Written assignments	49.8	50.2
Inquiry teaching/discovery learning	47.1	52.9
Debates	45.5	54.5
Demonstrations	42.4	57.6
Independent study	42.2	57.8
Other audiovisuals	31.0	69.0
Group projects	30.0	70.0
Student presentations	28.7	71.3
Small group discussions	28.1	71.9
Laboratory activities	26.0	74.0
Simulation/role plays	17.8	82.2
Field experiences	12.0	88.0
TV lessons	9.9	90.1

In designating from the lists of alternatives concerning learning group sizes and repertoires of teaching strategies, 79 per cent of respondents reported that the whole class lesson was their most frequently used teaching/learning method, with whole class discussions (54 per cent) being the next most frequent. By contrast, 72 per cent reported that small group discussions are used "not very often" or "never", and a variety of less teacher-directed approaches to learning experiences (for example, field experiences, T.V. lessons, simulation/role plays) are used "not very often" or "never". In these respects, teachers and department heads reported similarly. Survey responses from EGHS showed that whole class lessons and whole class discussions were mentioned slightly more frequently as occurring "always or most of the time" or "often".

Analyses of observational and interview records from EGHS in 1977 showed that 11 per cent of all recorded decisions were categorised as being about learning experiences and their organisation. It is reiterated that no attempt was made in CAP to observe classroom practices, this not being intended nor being part of the contract negotiated between the CAP team and the EGHS staff.

The curriculum materials used in classrooms also relate to the nature of learning experiences. Respondents were asked to "tell how often (they used) each type of material" in their designated classes. Table 4.6 indicates the relative frequencies of usage.

Table 4.6: Types of Curriculum Materials Reported by Teachers and Department Heads as Being Used in Designated Classes, by Percentages of Respondents. (n = 516)

	Always or most of the time	Often	Not very often	Never
Text books	25%	39%	28%	8%
Chalkboard	23	54	21	2
Duplicated notes	6	36	40	18
Activity units	6	33	39	22
Programmed units	6	26	34	34
Tests of student progress	5	48	35	12
Overhead transparencies	4	24	41	31
Teacher manuals	3	24	36	37
Charts	3	30	49	18
Lab books	3	17	18	62
Supplementary books	2	47	39	12
Games/Simulation/Role play	2	21	40	37
Slides	1	26	45	28
Kits	1	18	43	38
Films	1	23	51	25
Film strips	1	21	48	30
Videotape	1	20	41	38
Audio tape	1	16	37	46
Records	1	12	29	58

Textbooks and chalkboards remained the most frequently used materials in the designated classes, with 25 per cent and 23 per cent of respondents respectively reporting the use of textbooks and chalkboards "always" or "most of the time".

Teacher perceptions from EGHS indicated similar results about the frequency of use of chalkboard and textbooks, as did students.

High levels of involvement in actually making materials within the departments of the schools are reported as being accepted for a number of types of material, as reflected in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Types of School-Made Materials Reported by Teachers and Department Heads as being used in Designated Classes By Percentages of Respondents. (n = 516)

Types of School-Made Materials	Percentage of Respondents
Duplicated notes	54
Tests of student progress	48
Overhead transparencies	44
Activity units	28
Programmed units	22
Charts	22
Slides	21
Videotape	17
Chalkboard	16
Games/Simulation/Role play	16
Audio tape	12
Kits	7
Supplementary books	6
Textbooks	4
Films	4
Film strips	3
Teacher manuals	3
Lab books	2
Records	2

Table 4.7 supports claims of heavy involvement of teachers in the production of curriculum materials tailored to the needs of their schools. Such time-consuming activities as the production of duplicated notes, tests of student progress and overhead transparencies are reported by significant numbers of respondents, with no significant differences in responses between the percentages of teacher and department heads. Data from the EGHS staff survey showed similar results to the national survey both in relation to types of materials and staff involvement in their production. Data analyses from the ethnographic study at EGHS showed that 3.2 per cent of all recorded decisions made at EGHS in 1977 were classified as being about curriculum materials.

The extent to which these teaching/learning activities and curriculum materials are directed towards individualisation of instruction in the designated classes is reported by responses summarised in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Reports of Percentages of Time Spent in Individualising Instruction in Designated Classes. (n = 516)

	Never or almost never	Not very often	A moderate amount	Often	Always or almost always
	0-10	11-33	34-67	68-90	91-100% of Time
Use of different objectives for different students	27	28	31	11	3
Use of different contents for different students	27	33	27	12	2
Use of different materials for different students	28	33	26	12	1
Use of different activities for different students	22	32	32	12	2
Use of different teaching methods for different students	19	29	35	14	3
Use of different grouping arrangements for different students	27	27	32	11	3
Use of different time blocks for different students	66	15	15	2	2
Use of different methods of assessing progress for different students	43	22	23	9	3

In general, between 50 and 60 per cent of respondents reported spending between zero and one-third of their time upon activities which might be considered as individualisation of instruction. Data from the EGHS staff survey showed similar results. Especially noteworthy is the apparent inflexibility in the differential allocation of time blocks for different students. This lack of individualisation may be seen as quite critical when one considers responses concerning the percentages of students for whom the respondents perceive the materials and content to be inappropriate. These data are reported in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Percentage of Students in Designated Classes for whom Materials and Content are Appropriate. (n = 516)

	Almost all	About 75%	About 50%	About 25%	Almost none
Ability level of students	42	42	13	2	1
Ethnic or cultural background of students	52	24	14	5	5
Interests of students	23	39	26	10	2

Table 4.9 reflects the perceived inappropriateness for all but 23 per cent of students of materials and content in terms of at least one of the three criteria of ability levels, cultural background and student interests. Results from the EGHS staff survey were similar to national data. These data highlight the discrepancy between the ideal (reported in Chapter V11 by Kallenberger) and the perceived actual curriculum. In the national sample, the most frequently mentioned category as a key feature of an ideal junior secondary curriculum was the individual child (51.5% of respondents as shown in Table 5.).

Related to the teaching/learning methods reported by respondents are staff perceptions of the nature of student activities. These are reported in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Student Activities Reported by Teachers and Departmental Heads in Their Own Designated Classes. (n = 516)

	Always or most of the time %	Often %	Not Very Often %	Never %
Use what they learn to solve problems or apply skills	30	54	15	1
Tell how places, people, techniques, and ideas are the same or different	8	58	29	5
Tell in their own words what they have read, seen, or heard	7	47	37	9
Memorise facts, dates, names, or places	3	23	58	16

Similar results were reported in the EGHS staff survey. Thus, higher cognitive skills (such as problem solving and applying skills) are perceived as occurring more often than memorisation. However, the reliability of these activities as reported by teachers needs to be critically evaluated in relation to the perceptions of principals and heads of department about what is happening in their schools.

Table 4.11: Perceptions of Principals and Department Heads of Student Activities in Classrooms in Their Schools. (n = 212)

	Always or most of the time %	Often %	Not Very Often %	Never %
Use what they learn to solve problems or apply skills	19	68	13	-
Tell how places, people, techniques, and ideas are the same or different	5	51	40	4
Tell in their own words what they have read, seen, or heard	4	66	26	4
Memorise facts, dates, names, or places	2	35	56	7

A comparison of Tables 4.10 and 4.11 shows that there exist discrepancies between self-reports of student activities by teaching staff on the one hand, and within-school observers such as principals and department heads on the other.

3. EVALUATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Teachers and department heads were asked to indicate the percentage of the student's overall grade that was based upon a number of different means of assessment used in their classes. Their responses are reported in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Percentages of Respondent Teachers and Department Heads Reporting a Variety of Approaches to Student Assessment (n = 516)

	10% or Less	11-40	41-70	71-100
Regular (e.g. weekly) tests of notes or content	52	24	16	8
Student attitudes	62	28	6	4
Term tests	46	28	18	8
Laboratory performance	80	15	4	1
Assignments/Projects	32	46	15	7
Participation in discussion	74	21	4	1
Others (please specify)	82	8	6	4

The overall impression from these reports is that assignment/projects, term and regular tests are used almost equally heavily in assessing student progress. One-fifth of respondents reported using methods of assessment additional to those listed in the questionnaire item (for example, practical work, bookwork, end-of-topic tests, skill performance, oral work, and homework).

Analyses of detailed 1977 data from EGHS ethnographic study showed that 3 per cent of all recorded decisions were classified as about evaluation of learning outcomes.

4. CURRICULUM CHANGES IMPLEMENTED

One item in the national survey sought information from teachers and department heads about changes initiated in their departments during the last three years. Responses covered objectives, teaching/learning approaches, evaluation, and a number of other areas of curriculum concern. These data are reported in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Teacher and Department Head Perceptions of Changes in Subject Departments (n = 516)

Possible Changes	% perceiving change introduced
New textbooks	65.9
New subjects	56.8
New sets of materials/equipment	55.4
Student choice of electives	48.8
Rearrangement of content	44.4
New teaching methods	41.9
Camping activities	37.0
Evaluation of the total program	35.1
Changed period duration	33.7
New/modified philosophy for the curriculum	33.5
New/modified objectives	31.2
Work experience program	30.0
Integration of subjects within your department	30.0
Team teaching	29.8
New/modified method of evaluating student progress	28.9
Thematic teaching	28.5
New or altered buildings	27.3
Flexible grouping of students	26.9
Use of community resources	25.6
New approach to timetabling	23.6
A total reorganization of the curriculum	13.4
Integration of subjects across departments	13.4
Open space teaching	12.8
Individual contracting by students for their program	10.9
After-school program	9.5
More in-school planning/preparation time for teachers	9.3
Other (please list)	1.2

Across Australia, more than one third of the respondents perceived that at least ten changes had been implemented during the last three years. Major changes included the introduction of new textbooks and materials, new subjects and student choice of electives, as well as changes in teaching and evaluation methods, content, and the inclusion of camping activities. They suggest that significant percentages of teachers and department heads have introduced innovative curriculum practices during the last three years.

Thirteen per cent of respondents to the national survey had initiated a total reorganization of the curriculum, and thirty four per cent had initiated a new/modified philosophy for the curriculum.

Thirty-five per cent of respondents to the national survey reported they had initiated an evaluation of the total program within their subject department.

5. ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS

By contrast the CAP team gathered no evidence in any of its 1509 observations of curriculum decisions of an overall evaluation of the whole-school curriculum and its impact on EGHS students.

There were examples at EGHS of deliberate curriculum change strategies. In 1977, the Social Science staff at a one-day meeting informally collected teacher opinion on the 1977 curriculum, and made changes for 1978 in the light of suggested modifications. The Home Science staff noted the changes made to their program or lesson register on their printed copies as they taught each unit. During the summer school holidays the Home Science department head prepared the new curriculum document to take into account these changes. One piece of information used in making curriculum changes was that "lots of people complained of boredom".

On the whole, curriculum changes at EGHS were made on the basis of perceived student outcomes or teacher preferences. Often serendipitous feedback about curriculum implementation was used in modifying programs

The 1509 recorded decisions identified by the CAP team from observational and interview data from EGHS in 1977 were classified into four "sub-systems" of the school as a social system. The sub-systems were designated as curriculum plan, resource utilisation, structure, and human relationships, as illustrated in Figure 4.1. The data are reported in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Recorded decisions from 1977 Ethnographic study, reported by social system categories of curriculum plan, resource utilisation, structure and human relationships subsystems

[illegible]ion Type	n	% of total	
Response to learner factors	27	1.8	
Curriculum objectives	4	0.3	
Learning experiences	131	8.7	
Organisation of learning experiences	34	2.3	
Evaluation of learning outcomes	43	2.9	
Curriculum processes	36	2.4	
Response to external events	22	1.5	
Curriculum plan subsystem			19.7
Administration/organisation	131	8.7	
Planning time	55	3.6	
Timetable	22	1.5	
Curriculum materials	48	3.2	
Money/fund raising	17	1.1	
Buildings/grounds/equipment	44	2.9	
Parental/community involvement	37	2.5	
Human resources	49	3.2	
Resource utilisation subsystem			26.7
Staffing	53	3.5	
Teacher role	57	3.8	
Industrial/political	56	3.7	
Teacher development	24	1.6	
Hidden curriculum	65	4.3	
Student population	1	0.1	
Structure subsystem			17.0
Teacher pupil relationships	24	1.6	
School philosophy	5	0.3	
Decision-making processes	70	4.6	
Staff amenities/morale	3	0.2	
Communication - external	57	3.8	
- internal	119	7.9	
Staff relationships	24	1.6	
Teamwork/leadership style	148	9.8	
Human relationships subsystem			29.9
Response to CAP	101	6.7	
TOTAL	1509	100.0	

These data indicate that nearly a third of the recorded decisions during 1977 were made about the human relationships sub-system, and more than one-quarter related to resource utilisation. Decisions about the intended curriculum comprised one-fifth of all recorded decisions, while those about the structure sub-system were slightly fewer (17%). The most frequently recorded concerning any specific aspect of the sub-systems was about teamwork/leadership style (10%), while those about learning experiences and administration/organisation were next in frequency (9% each).

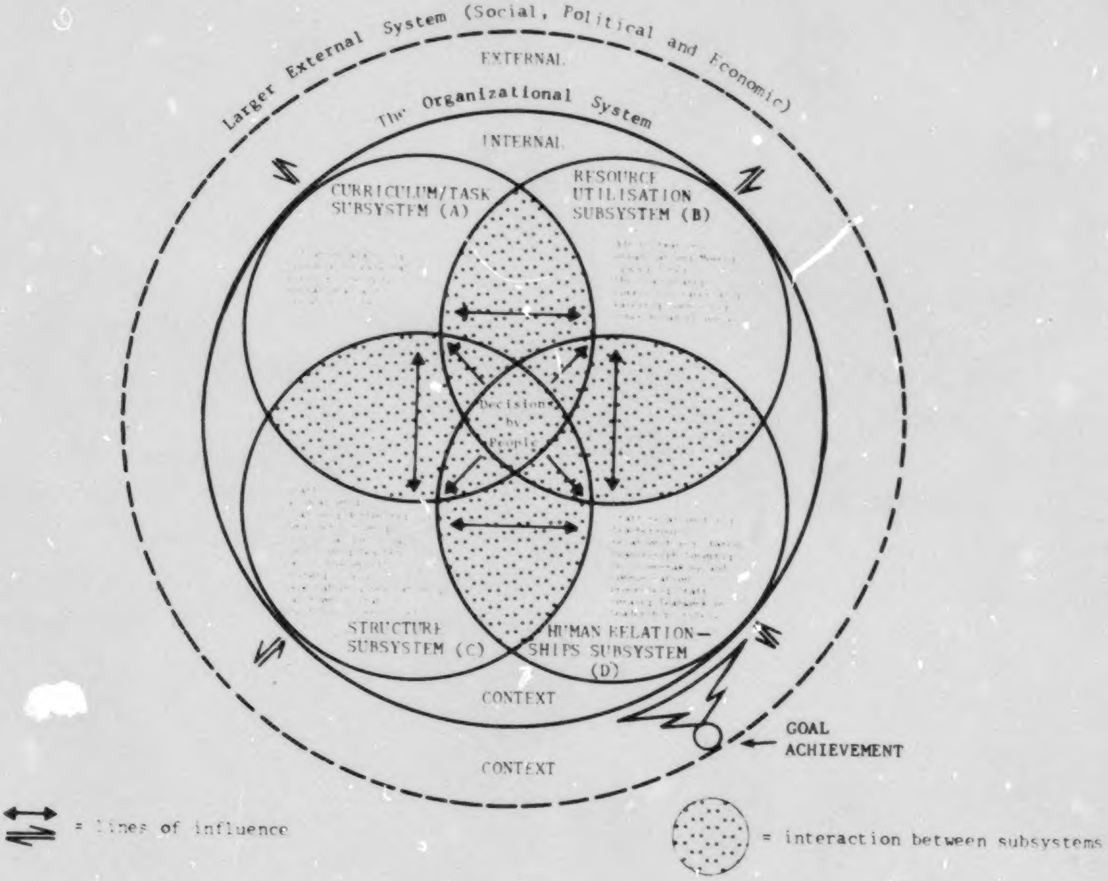

Larger External System (Social, Political and Economic)
EXTERNAL
The Organizational System
INTERNAL
CURRICULUM/TASK SUBSYSTEM (A)
RESOURCE UTILISATION SUBSYSTEM (B)
Decisions by People
STRUCTURE SUBSYSTEM (C)
HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS SUBSYSTEM (D)
CONTEXT
GOAL ACHIEVEMENT
CONTEXT
= lines of influence
= interaction between subsystems

Figure 4.1: The Context of School-based Curriculum Decision-making (Harrison, 1979)

6. STUDENT PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING EGHS DECISIONS

A survey was conducted of 100 randomly selected students from Years 7-10 (inc.) at Eucalypt Grove High School concerning their perceptions of the actual or implemented curriculum. Data from a seven-category Likert scale response mode ("strongly agree" to "strongly disagree") were reduced to "agree"/"disagree" categories. These results were first reported in an interim report to EGHS staff in December 1977. They are reported below in terms of their reasons for coming to school, work covered, what they learn, the school environment, student relationships with teachers, other students and the principal, participation in decision-making and problems encountered in the school.

(a) Reasons for Coming to School

Twenty-seven per cent of students didn't like coming to school. Seventy-two per cent reported that they liked school and only 19 per cent would have gone to another school if they had their choice, while 36 per cent would have liked to leave school as soon as possible. Many students didn't care about learning (68%), but classes were reported as enjoyable (61%) and 64 per cent of students agreed that they learnt things that were important, while two-thirds of students agreed that the things learnt were useful then and later (65%), although they learnt things without knowing why (51%), they used textbooks too much (52%), there were things they would have liked to learn about that were not taught (71%), and only one-third agreed that they had a choice of lesson activities (34%).

(b) Work Covered

Students considered that they kept going over work (66%), some of the work was too hard (51%), and the things that were given to them by teachers to read were too hard (19%). They didn't have enough time for work (53%), but they listened to their teachers (58%).

(c) What Students Learn

As for their own development, they learnt to work well with other people (66%), learnt the basic skills (85%), learnt to get a good job (52%), to enjoy music and art (43%), and to understand themselves better (57%), while 67 per cent reported that they were becoming fitter and healthier.

(d) The School Environment

Fifty-seven per cent considered that nobody cared what the rooms looked like, and 19 per cent considered that the school didn't consider students important if they didn't want to go to university.

(e) Interpersonal Relationships

The students considered that the teachers enjoyed their work (44%), and that teachers listened to them (60%), that teachers treated them like little children (55%). More than one-third (39%) of students disagreed with the statement "Teachers care about me", and a further 17 per cent didn't know whether the teachers cared about them. Students were afraid to disagree with their teachers (47%). Teachers encouraged students to compete for high marks (71%), students felt they had to do better than each other (82%), but on the other hand, high marks were not part of the peer group reward system, as only 26 per cent considered they must get high marks to be popular. Other students were considered as friendly (74%), but didn't care much about them (51%). Eighty-four per cent of students knew the Principal/Acting Principal when they saw him/her, and half agreed that the Principal/Acting Principal was friendly (48%) and helpful (45%).

(f) Participation in Decision-making

Nearly one-half (47%) of the students didn't feel that they had any freedom, and more than three-quarters (76%) would have liked to be able to make more decisions about what went on. Rules were considered strict (57%); one-quarter of students considered that they helped make the rules (28%), and about a half (49%) considered that there should have been a smoking area provided.

(g) Problems Encountered in the School

Only one-third of the students considered it easy to get help for personal problems (38%). Forty-four per cent were stopped by kids from playing on some parts of the playground and 34 per cent reported that there were places they didn't go because they were afraid of other students. Drugs were considered a major problem by 43 per cent of students and alcohol was considered as a major problem by 36 per cent, with an additional 16 per cent and 22 per cent of students respectively responding with "Don't Know" responses.

7. SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed responses related to the question "What curriculum decisions were made in schools?" Among the noteworthy findings were the following:

- 71% of respondents to the CAP national survey considered that written statements of their school objectives existed;
- approximately one-quarter of teachers considered statements of objectives to have "lots" of influence on a variety of school matters, and a far higher percentage of principals perceived objectives to have lots of influence;
- there were interstate differences concerning the relative emphases on various types of objectives, but nationally the emphasis was heavest upon intellectual development and less upon aesthetic appreciation and emotional development;
- concerning the origin of statements of school objectives, 24% thought they had been written by the total staff;
- at EGHS, few decisions were made about objectives (4 of 1509 recorded decisions in 1977);
- 79% of CAP national survey respondents used whole class lessons, the most used teaching/learning strategy;
- of curriculum materials used, textbooks (by 25%) and chalkboard (by 23%) were used always or most of the time, while duplicated notes were used most of school-made materials (by 54%);
- individualisation was rarely used by teachers, and this probably accounts for the perceived inappropriateness of materials and content for high percentages of students;
- higher cognitive skills are perceived as occurring more frequently than memorisation, although teachers' responses indicated higher cognitive levels were being taught than did principals and department heads;

- teachers use a variety of assessment strategies which then contribute to the development of a student's overall grade;
- one third of respondents reported a variety of changes which had been made in aspects of subject department curriculum. In descending frequencies, these changes included new textbooks, new subjects, new materials, new elective choices, content rearrangement, new teaching methods, camping activities, evaluation of the total program, period duration changes and a new/modified curriculum philosophy.
- fewer than one-fifth of decisions at EGHS in 1977 were curriculum-related.
- although two-thirds of EGHS students didn't care about learning, 72% reported that they liked school, and 66% learnt to work well with people, 85% learnt the basic skills;
- according to EGHS students, their teachers treated them like little children (55%), encouraged them to compete for high marks (71%);
- more than three quarters of students would have liked more participation in decisions;
- only 38% of EGHS students found it easy to get help for personal problems;
- 43% of students considered drugs as a major problem and 36% considered alcohol as a major problem.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS: WHO MADE DECISIONS AND HOW?

Two crucial focal questions explored in both the national survey and the ethnographic study at Eucalypt Grove High School were:

Who participated in curriculum decision-making in the schools? and

How were curriculum decisions made?

In analysing the responses to these questions, several issues were examined. These included levels of perceived participation, by staff, parents and students in departmental and whole-school decisions, and perceptions of control of and satisfaction with decision-making.

For each of the above two questions, data from the survey are first reported. Case study data is provided to illustrate some of the strategies used by EGHS staff.

1. WHO PARTICIPATED IN CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING?

(a) Survey Results

Indices of participation in curriculum decision-making may be gained by examining perceptions of the extent of participation reported by respondents concerning staff, parents, and students for a number of curriculum-related areas. Perceived amounts of participation are reported for staff in Table 6.1

Table 5.1: Perceptions of Principals and Teachers Concerning their Amounts of Participation in Various Curriculum Decisions at School Level

Amount of Participation of Staff	TEACHERS (n = 370)		PRINCIPALS (n = 70)		TOTAL (n = 440)	
	% A lot or Some	% Very Little or None	% A lot or Some	% Very Little or None	% A lot or Some	% Very Little or None
Statement of school objectives	74	26	94	6	77	23
Subjects offered by the school	76	24	94	6	79	21
Teacher allocations	52	48	82	18	57	43
Content within subjects	90	10	96	4	91	9
Sequencing of content	91	9	96	4	92	8
Electives to be offered	83	17	93	7	85	15
Materials used in teaching	93	7	93	7	94	6
Methods of teaching	91	9	100	-	95	5
Assessment of student progress	91	9	100	-	93	7
Resource people used for learning	78	22	91	9	80	20
Timetabling	42	58	72	28	46	54
Nature of Reports on student progress	78	22	96	4	81	19
Evaluation of school program	71	29	91	9	75	25
Planning of physical facilities	55	45	78	22	59	41
School rules	69	31	87	13	72	28

There were marked differences in perceptions of the amount of participation of staff between principals and teachers responding to the survey. In general, principals perceived that staff participated to a greater extent in school-wide decisions than the staff perceived themselves as participating.

Teachers (91%) and principals (96%) perceived that staff have "a lot of" or "some" participation in decisions about content within subjects and about sequencing of content. Ninety-three per cent of each of these two respondent groups perceived that staff participate "a lot or some" in decisions about "materials used in teaching". Ninety-one per cent of teachers and all (100%) principals perceived that staff participated "a lot" or "some" in decisions about methods of teaching and in the assessment of student progress. Thus, with the exception of school objectives, decisions about the major elements of curriculum controllable within the context of the classroom were perceived by both respondent groups to be in the hands of teachers.

By contrast, for decisions extending beyond the scope of their own classrooms, educationally significant percentages of teachers perceived themselves as having very little or no participation in such school-wide decisions as timetabling (58%), teacher allocations (48%), planning of physical facilities (45%), and more than a quarter perceived themselves as having very little or no participation in decisions about school rules (31%), evaluation of the school program (29%) and statement of school objectives (26%).

In Table 5.2 below are reported the perceptions of teachers and principals concerning the amounts of participation of parents and students in curriculum decision-making.

Table 5.2: Perceptions of Principals and Teachers Concerning the Amounts of Participation of Parents and Students in Various Curriculum Decisions at School Level

Amount of Participation of Parents n = 440	A lot or some	Very little or None
	%	%
Statement of school objectives	18	82
Subjects offered by the school	22	78
Teacher allocations	3	97
Content within subjects	5	95
Sequencing of content	3	97
Electives to be offered	18	82
Materials used in teaching	16	84
Methods of teaching	4	96
Assessment of student progress	10	90
Resource people used for learning	16	84
Timetabling	2	98
Nature of reports on student progress	20	80
Evaluation of school program	16	84
Planning of physical facilities	43	57
School rules	23	77

Amount of Participation of Students n = 440	A lot or some	Very little or None
	%	%
Statement of school objectives	13	87
Subjects offered by the school	24	76
Teacher allocations	2	98
Content within subjects	12	88
Sequencing of content	5	95
Electives to be offered	40	60
Materials used in teaching	9	91
Methods of teaching	11	89
Assessment of student progress	7	93
Resource people used for learning	9	91
Timetabling	3	97
Nature of reports on student progress	5	95
Evaluation of school program	9	91
Planning of physical facilities	18	82
School rules	33	67

Overall, the amount of participation perceived by the vast majority of principals and teachers for parents and students was "very little" or "none". Nevertheless, parents were perceived by 43 per cent of respondents as having "a lot or some" influence on the planning of physical facilities while students were perceived as having "a lot or some" influence on "electives to be offered" (by 40 per cent of respondents) and on "school rules" (33%). Parents were perceived by only 21 per cent of respondents as participating "a lot or some" in decisions about "nature of reports on student progress" and "content within subjects" (only 15 per cent of respondents). This is inconsistent with the frequency of publicly-reported concerns that employers and parent groups are concerned about school reports and curriculum content.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how much authority they considered was exercised by various persons or groups. Table 5.3 summarises the responses.

Table 5.3: Perceptions of Principals, Department Heads and Teachers Concerning Authority Exercised in Curriculum Decision-Making

Curriculum decision-makers	Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Authority Exercised															
	Principals n=68				Department Heads n=144				Teachers n=372				Total n=584			
	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil
Department heads	75*	21	2	-	56	35	8	1	58	32	10	1	59	31	8	1
Deputy Principal	52	34	10	2	17	38	32	13	33	34	22	11	31	35	23	10
Principal	59*	31	10	-	38	31	24	7	49	29	16	7	47	30	17	6
Individual Parents	2	10	50	38	-	6	35	60	0.3	11	39	49	0.3	10	39	51
P & C Organisation	2	10	44	43	1	6	41	51	-	17	43	40	0.3	14	43	43
Curriculum Development Centre	10	25	41	24	3	22	40	35	5	29	38	27	5	27	39	28
You personally	47*	38	12	2	22	53*	23	2	13	39*	34	13	20	42	29	9
The Teachers	43*	53	4	-	21	60	19	1	21	51*	25	4	24	53	21	2
The Education Department	28	50	16	6	22	46	22	10	27	36	28	9	26	40	25	9
External Exam Bodies	35*	29	22	13	23	46	16	15	27	33	27	17	27	36	21	16
Students	-	27	50	24	-	11	54	35	1	15	44	41	0.3	15	47	38

Asterisks(*) indicate differing perceptions of principals, department heads and teachers.

Department heads were the group perceived by the highest percentages of all three respondent groups, and especially by the principals, as exercising the "substantial" levels of authority. The groups consistently underestimated their "personal" authority compared with the authority they perceived for their own peer groups.

In general, where differences exist, the tendency is for principals to perceive other decision-makers as having more authority than department heads and teachers perceived them to have. Principals also considered that department heads and teachers had more authority than they themselves perceived they exercised. Specific examples of these differences are observable in Table 5.3 and are asterisked for the reader's attention.

There were also marked differences between States concerning perceptions of curriculum decision-making authority for many items. These are reported in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Perceptions of Authority in Curriculum Decision-Making by State (% of State Totals)

Curriculum decision-makers	STATE																																			
	NSW n=102				VIC n=92				QLD n=64				SA n=109				WA n=85				TAS n=98				ACT n=22				NT n=12				TOTAL n=584			
	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil	Substantial	Some	Little	Nil
Department heads	*65.7	26.5	5.9	2.0	*46.7	38.0	14.1	-	62.5	28.1	7.8	-	61.5	29.4	9.2	-	*68.2	23.5	5.9	2.4	53.1	36.7	9.2	1.0	45.5	*50.0	4.5	-	75.0	25.0	-	-	59.2	31.2	8.4	0.9
Deputy Principal	23.5	30.4	29.4	16.7	28.3	35.9	21.7	14.1	31.3	35.9	28.1	3.1	15.6	34.9	*45.0	4.6	20.0	27.1	*32.9	20.0	35.7	37.8	20.4	6.1	*40.9	*40.9	13.6	4.5	16.7	50.0	25.0	8.3	31.2	35.1	22.9	10.4
Principal	47.1	21.6	20.6	10.8	48.9	25.0	16.3	9.8	48.4	35.9	12.5	3.1	54.1	31.2	12.8	1.8	*36.5	23.5	30.6	9.4	49.0	39.8	10.2	1.0	45.5	31.8	18.2	4.5	33.3	33.3	16.7	16.7	47.3	29.5	17.1	6.2
Individual Parents	-	3.9	33.3	62.7	-	13.0	34.8	52.2	-	9.4	35.9	54.7	-	18.3	39.4	42.2	-	5.9	38.8	55.3	2.0	6.1	44.9	46.9	-	18.2	*63.6	18.2	-	-	58.3	41.7	0.3	9.8	39.4	50.5
P & C Organization	-	9.8	31.3	52.9	1.1	19.6	35.9	43.5	-	12.5	45.3	42.2	-	17.4	48.6	33.9	1.2	8.2	38.8	*51.8	-	12.2	44.9	41.8	-	18.2	*63.6	18.2	-	16.7	33.3	41.7	0.3	13.7	42.5	43.2
Curriculum Development Centre	2.0	22.5	37.3	37.3	2.2	19.6	45.7	32.6	9.4	21.9	42.2	26.6	8.3	*36.7	33.0	22.0	10.6	*35.3	27.1	27.1	2.0	24.5	51.0	22.4	-	27.3	36.4	36.4	8.3	25.0	33.3	33.3	5.3	27.1	39.0	28.4
You personally	18.6	40.2	30.4	10.8	17.4	48.9	29.3	4.3	23.4	35.9	29.7	10.9	20.2	39.4	24.8	15.6	16.5	42.4	30.6	9.4	14.3	49.0	31.6	5.1	*36.4	31.8	22.7	9.1	50.0	33.3	16.7	-	19.5	42.3	28.8	9.2
The Teachers	17.6	58.8	19.6	3.9	*40.2	51.1	8.7	-	14.1	57.8	23.4	4.7	18.3	54.1	23.9	3.7	18.8	52.9	25.9	2.4	23.5	48.0	27.6	1.0	*36.4	45.5	18.2	-	50.0	50.0	-	-	23.5	53.3	20.9	2.4
The Education Department	*41.2	46.1	9.8	2.9	4.3	34.8	*45.7	15.2	*50.0	35.9	10.9	3.1	*17.4	*47.7	29.4	5.5	*40.0	41.2	14.1	4.7	17.3	*38.8	32.7	11.2	-	22.7	36.4	*40.9	16.7	25.0	33.3	25.0	25.7	40.2	25.2	8.9
External Exam Bodies Bodies	*37.3	40.2	13.7	8.8	21.7	37.0	30.4	10.9	20.3	23.4	23.4	32.8	31.2	42.2	22.0	4.6	*45.9	*42.4	5.9	5.9	*13.3	35.7	27.6	23.5	-	-	22.7	*77.3	8.3	25.0	33.3	33.3	27.1	38.0	20.9	16.1
Students	-	9.8	54.9	35.3	-	14.1	53.3	32.6	-	10.9	42.2	46.9	0.9	*23.9	37.6	37.6	1.2	8.2	42.4	48.2	-	13.3	49.0	37.8	-	*31.8	54.5	13.6	-	41.7	33.3	16.7	0.3	15.1	46.7	37.7

Gross interstate disparities were highlighted in Table 5.4 concerning the relative decision-making authority of national, state, and school-level institutions and personnel. In some states or territories, the Education Department and external exam bodies were seen by higher percentages of respondents to have substantial/some authority (e.g., N.S.W. 87%/77%, Queensland 86%/44% and W.A. 81%/88%), while at the other extreme, in the A.C.T., they were seen as having little/nil authority (77%/100%). Other noteworthy interstate differences in perceived authority were observed in relation to Australia-wide results on the following:

New South Wales: Education Department - perceived by 41% substantial authority;
external exam bodies - more authority;
department heads - more authority;

Victoria: department heads - less authority;
teachers - more authority;
Education Department - perceived by only 4% as having substantial authority (e.g., N.S.W.)

Queensland: external exam bodies - less authority;
Education Department - more authority;

South Australia: deputy principal - less authority;
CDC - more authority;
Education Department - less authority;
students - more authority;

Western Australia: department heads - more authority;
deputy principal - less authority;
principal - less authority;
P & C organisation - less authority;
CDC - more authority;
Education Department - more authority;
external exam bodies - more authority.

Tasmania: Education Department - less authority;
external exam bodies - less authority.

A.C.T.: department heads - less authority;
deputy principal - more authority;
individual parents - more authority;
P & C organisation - more authority;
you personally - more authority;
teachers - more authority;
Education Department - less authority;
external exam bodies - less authority;
students - more authority.

Respondents in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia perceived that curriculum decision-making authority was exercised by central authorities substantially more than did respondents from other states. On the other hand, A.C.T. in particular reflected greater devolution of decision-making authority to the school and its community.

One index of community participation from CAP findings was the perceived levels of parental participation in curriculum decision-making. Principals, Heads of Departments and teachers were asked in a number of ways to assess the role of the Parents' and Citizens' Association (P & C) in the school. Respondents considered the organisation exercised little or no authority in curriculum decision-making. From Table 6.4, it can be seen that the P & C rated as low as students and individual parents regarding authority for curriculum decision-making. There was little difference between perceptions of respondents from different states or groups of respondents regarding P & C authority. These results reinforce earlier comments concerning Table 6.2.

Staff from Eucalypt Grove High School (EGHS) responded to their survey similarly to respondents in the national survey. Table 6.4 compares the responses from the national survey, staff of EGHS and a group of parents from EGHS regarding perceived levels of participation in curriculum decision-making.

Table 5.5: Perceived levels of participation of parents in curriculum decision-making

Areas of Participation of Parents	Perceived levels of participation					
	National survey		EGHS Staff		EGHS Parent	
	n=440		n=23		n=39	
	A lot or some	Very little or None	A lot or some	Very little or None	A lot or some	Very little or None
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Statement of school objectives	18	82	13	83	14	84
Subjects offered by the school	22	78	13	83	11	87
Teacher allocations	3	97	0	96	5	90
Content within subjects	5	95	9	87	5	90
Sequencing of content	3	97	9	87	8	90
Electives to be offered	18	82	8	88	13	85
Materials used in teaching	16	84	26	74	15	82
Methods of teaching	4	96	4	92	8	90
Assessment of student progress	10	90	4	92	10	87
Resource people used for learning	16	84	9	87	3	95
Timetabling	2	98	0	96	0	97
Nature of Reports on student progress	20	80	8	88	18	79
Evaluation of school program	16	84	13	83	5	90
Planning of physical facilities	43	57	48	48	8	90
School rules	23	77	9	87	18	77

EGHS parent and staff perceptions of parent participation levels differed to some extent from each other, and in several cases revealed much lower levels of participation than the national survey in relation to curriculum decision-making.

In general, however, it could be said that the levels of parental participation were perceived by the majority of respondents as relatively innocuous. This is in contrast to perceived levels of participation of school personnel. The findings from Table 5.4 are reinforced by additional data concerning perceptions of principals, department heads and teachers of persons most responsible for curriculum decision-making at school department levels. This data is summarised in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Perceptions of Principals, Department Heads and Teachers of Persons Most Responsible for Various Curriculum Decisions, Within School Departments.
(Based upon responses of 68 principals, 144 department heads, and 372 teachers)

		All Teachers in Department Jointly	Individual Teachers	Head of Department	Principal	Librarian	Authorities Outside the School
(a) Selection of curriculum material	PR	30%	11%	50%	3%	3%	3%
	HD	43	14	36	-	1	6
	T	36	27	31	2	-	4
(b) Selection of objectives	PR	44	2	42	8	-	4
	HD	44	11	35	2	-	8
	T	38	16	34	5	-	7
(c) Selection of Subject Content	PC	37	13	39	3	-	8
	HD	45	20	30	-	-	5
	T	32	38	24	1	-	5
(d) Methods of teaching	PR	26	60	14	-	-	-
	HD	22	72	6	-	-	-
	T	13	80	6	1	-	-
(e) Procedures for assessing student progress	PR	47	5	30	15	-	3
	HD	39	21	38	2	-	-
	T	31	25	29	13	-	2
(f) Use of equipment and materials	PR	27	55	13	3	2	-
	HD	27	56	16	1	-	-
	T	20	64	11	4	1	-
(g) Use of rooms and other teaching areas	PR	15	15	20	47	3	-
	H	12	12	41	35	-	-
	T	22	24	29	21	3	1
(h) Implementation of new or modified programs	PR	40	8	37	12	-	3
	HD	31	16	49	3	-	1
	T	36	26	29	7	1	1
(i) Evaluation of the departmental programs	PR	46	2	37	12	-	3
	HD	52	5	38	2	1	2
	T	47	14	31	5	1	2

(PR = perceptions of principal
HD = perceptions of heads of department
T = perceptions of teachers).

In every case, a smaller percentage of principals perceived that individual teachers were responsible for curriculum decisions within their departments than did teachers themselves. These data highlight the contrast between perceptions of participatory and responsibility levels between school level (see Table 5.1) and school department level (see Table 5.6). Two of the respondent groups (principals and individual teachers) in each case perceived themselves as having more responsibility within school departments than other groups perceive them to have

There was general agreement indicated by data in Table 5.6 between all respondents that decisions about methods of teaching and use of equipment and materials were the responsibility of individual teachers.

There were some marked differences in perceived levels of participation in departmental decisions about curriculum areas between teachers and department heads, as shown in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Perceived Levels of Participation in Departmental Decisions

(Teachers n = 372
(Heads n = 144)

Curriculum Decision Area		Perceived Levels of Participation		
		A lot	Some	None or Very Little
		%	%	%
Sequence of topics	T	51	36	13
	H	40	41	19
Materials/Resources to be used	T	50	39	11
	H	29	58	13
Emphasis in teaching methods	T	48	34	18
	H	15	57	28
Content of the program	T	44	41	15
	H	61	35	4
Development of programs for your department	T	41	42	17
	H	74	26	-
Objectives of program	T	37	42	21
	H	51	43	6
Evaluation methods for assessing student progress	T	35	44	21
	H	46	46	8
How facilities are to be used	T	34	45	21
	H	37	51	12
How Program is to be implemented	T	33	45	22
	H	40	53	7
Total Program of Individual students	T	30	34	36
	H	15	49	36
Ongoing evaluation of curriculum	T	28	43	29
	H	35	55	10
Teacher Allocations	T	7	20	73
	H	61	26	13

Teachers perceived their participation to be highest in relation to sequencing of topics (51 per cent "a lot"), emphasis in teaching methods (48 per cent "a lot"), materials and resources to be used (50 per cent "a lot"). There were notable contrasts in relation to perceived levels of participation in teacher allocations (heads 61 per cent "a lot", teachers 7 per cent "a lot", and with 73 per cent of teachers perceiving they have "very little" or "no" participation in determining their teaching allocation), and in the development of programs for the department (41 per cent of teachers and 74 per cent of heads perceiving "a lot") Teachers perceived that they had relatively little power in the allocation of teaching duties. Additionally, approximately a third of teachers perceived very little or no participation in decisions concerning "the total program of individual students" (36 per cent) and in "the ongoing evaluation of curriculum" (29 per cent).

A similar item was used in the questionnaire to principals concerning their levels of participation in curriculum decision areas, and the data are summarised in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Perceived Levels of Participation of Principals in Curriculum Decision Areas (n = 68)

Curriculum Decision Area	Perceived Levels of Participation		
	A lot	Some	Very Little or None
	%	%	%
Ongoing evaluation of school program	66	32	2
Teacher Allocations	49	43	8
The subjects or areas taught	46	38	16
Materials/Resources purchased	38	47	15
Evaluation methods for assessing student progress	35	50	15
How facilities are to be used	22	54	24
How the program is to be implemented	22	50	28
The development of program	18	57	25
Total Program of individual students	16	51	33
Teaching methods	3	47	50

Thus, respondent principals perceived their participation to be highest in relation to "ongoing evaluation of the school program" (97 per cent "a lot or some"), "teacher allocations" (91 per cent "a lot or some"), "evaluation methods for assessing student progress" (85 per cent "a lot or some"), "subjects or areas to be taught" (82 per cent "a lot or some")

Relating the data from Tables 5.7 and 5.8, it is evident that significant numbers of all three groups of respondents perceived that they did not have "a lot" of participation in decisions about the "total program of individual students".

Teachers and department heads were asked to indicate their perceptions regarding their participation in decisions about some designated area of their planning and teaching. Details are shown in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Amounts of Control Perceived by Respondents for Decisions about Designated Areas of Planning and Teaching

(Teachers = 372)
(Department Heads = 144)

Curriculum Decision Area		Perceived Levels of Participation			
		A lot	Some	Very Little	None
		%	%	%	%
Stating objectives	H	77	15	8	-
	T	38	41	16	5
Use of Classroom space	H	62	23	12	3
	T	55	27	13	5
Scheduling time use	H	44	28	20	8
	T	35	30	23	12
Choosing teaching materials	H	71	24	5	-
	T	65	28	6	1
Assessing student progress	H	83	13	4	-
	T	63	31	3	3
Selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught	H	81	16	3	-
	T	55	36	6	3
Grouping students for learning	H	49	26	19	6
	T	45	32	15	3
Choosing teaching techniques	H	81	15	5	-
	T	77	19	2	2
Choosing learning activities	H	72	24	4	-
	T	69	26	3	2

For all designated areas of planning and teaching, a higher percentage of department heads perceived that they had "a lot" of control than did teachers, particularly in the areas of "stating objectives" and selecting contents, topics and skills to be taught". In general, both groups of respondents perceived high levels of control over decisions concerning the variety of planning and teaching functions (when "a lot" and "some" are taken together). It is noteworthy, however, that relatively lower levels of control were perceived by both groups in relation to "scheduling time use" and "grouping students for learning".

By contrast, principals perceived that they had relatively less control over decisions concerning areas of planning and teaching in their schools (Table 5.10).

Table 5.10: Amounts of Control Perceived by Principals for Decisions about Designated Areas of Planning and Teaching (n = 68)

Curriculum Decision Area	Perceived Levels of Control			
	A lot	Some	Very Little	None
	%	%	%	%
Stating Objectives	46	46	8	-
Use of classroom space	32	49	16	3
Scheduling time use	35	55	10	-
Choosing teaching materials	7	44	46	3
Assessing student progress	25	60	15	-
Selecting content, topics and skills to be taught	1	41	50	8
Grouping student for learning	25	40	28	7
Choosing teaching techniques	3	25	51	21
Choosing learning activities	3	25	63	9

With the exceptions of "stating objectives"(46 per cent), "scheduling time use" (35 per cent) and "use of classroom space" (32 per cent) only one quarter or substantially less of principals perceived that they had "a lot" of control in designated areas of planning and teaching.

Teachers and heads of departments were asked to report upon their levels of satisfaction in a number of areas of their planning and teaching (See Table 5.11).

Table 5.11: Levels of Satisfaction Reported by Department Heads and Teachers Concerning Designated Areas of Planning and Teaching (n = 516)

Curriculum Decision Area		Perceived Levels of Satisfaction			
		Very Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Stating Objectives	H	10%	51%	37%	2%
	T	17	52	27	4
Use of Classroom Space	H	26	53	17	4
	T	25	56	14	5
Scheduling Time Use	H	26	57	16	1
	T	26	50	20	4
Choosing Teaching Materials	H	29	56	14	1
	T	27	55	16	2
Assessing Student Progress	H	36	45	17	2
	T	27	55	15	3
Selecting Content, topics and skills to be taught	H	36	54	9	1
	T	36	51	10	3
Grouping Students for learning	H	24	50	23	3
	T	18	52	26	4
Choosing teaching techniques	H	35	50	14	1
	T	29	57	11	3
Choosing learning activities	H	26	53	18	3
	T	26	56	15	3

The highest proportion of either group of respondents reporting themselves as "very satisfied" about their own planning and teaching in any of the designated areas was 36 per cent. In general, there were few "very satisfied" respondents. On the other hand, the percentages of "very dissatisfied" were all 5% or less, and percentages of "moderately satisfied" all (but one) 50% or more.

Looking beyond planning and teaching within classrooms, principals were asked to indicate their levels of satisfaction with planning and teaching in their schools. Department Heads were asked about their satisfaction about their own departments. (See Table 5.12).

Table 5.12: Levels of Satisfaction with Planning and Teaching
(a) within schools (Principals, n = 68);
(b) within departments (Heads, n =144).

Curriculum Decision Area		Perceived Levels of Satisfaction			
		Very Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Stating Objectives	P	12%	64%	21%	3%
	H	26	55	15	4
Use of classroom space	P	34	59	6	1
	H	25	49	20	6
Scheduling Time Use	P	35	46	19	-
	H	21	58	17	4
Choosing Teaching Materials	P	34	54	12	-
	H	29	53	17	1
Assessing Student Progress	P	22	60	16	2
	H	34	47	16	3
Selecting content, topics	P	23	65	12	-
	H	39	45	15	1
Grouping students for learning	P	22	57	21	-
	H	20	56	22	2
Choosing teaching techniques	P	16	59	25	-
	H	25	61	13	1
Choosing learning activities	P	16	62	22	-
	H	27	58	14	1

Fewer than 25% of respondents reported themselves as being "dissatisfied" with their planning or teaching, while generally one-quarter of department heads were "very satisfied".

(b) Case Study Data

Data from the EGHS case study had indicated that 1509 recorded decisions had been made during 1977 (cf. Chapter 3). An analysis of that data to identify the personnel involved in the decision-making is reported in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13: Recorded Decisions from 1977 EGHS Study Reported in Decision-Maker Groups

Decision-Makers	n	%		
Principal	53	3.5		
Acting Principal	109	7.2	1	
Principal	162			10.7
Deputy principal	24	1.6		
Subject dept. head	108	7.2	1	
Acting dept. head	21	1.4		
Acting deputy principal	30	2.0		
Executive other than dept. head	57	3.8		
Executive (not princ) acting individually	240			15.9
Executive other than dept head + others	3	0.2		
Princ + subject dept head	2	0.1		
Princ + exec. other than dept heads	4	0.3		
Deputy/acting deputy with teachers	2	0.1		
Deputy with ancillary	3	0.2		
Principal with teacher(s)	6	0.4		
Subject dept head with teacher(s)	1	0.1		
Principal with some executive members	5	0.3		
Acting principal + other staff member	16	1.1		
Acting deputy + other staff member	5	0.3		
Acting dept head + teachers	1	0.1		
Dept head and librarian	3	0.2		
Executive plus others	51			3.4
Executive meeting	4	0.3		
Total staff meeting	13	0.9		
Year group	1	0.1		
Subject dept group	96	6.4		
Sub-group in subject dept	6	0.4		
Ad hoc group	17	1.1		
Librarian with teachers	17	1.1		
Mistress in charge of girls + counsellor	2	0.1		
Staff groups	156			10.3
Decision-Makers				
Librarians staff	2	0.1		
Individual teacher(s)	109	7.2	1	
Sportsmaster	1	0.1		
Counsellor	1	0.1		
Student teacher	1	0.1		
Ancillary staff member	10	0.7		
Librarian	37	2.4		
Individuals	161			10.7
Teachers and students	1	0.1		
Students (ad hoc group)	6	0.4		
Form/club of pupils	2	0.1		
Students (alone or together)	49	3.2		
Student teacher + class	3	0.2		
Students	61			4.0
Parent group - informal	1	0.1		
Parent or relative - individual	14	0.9		
P & C Association	9	0.6		
Ladies Auxiliary	1	0.1		
Parents	25			1.7
Principal with external agent	1	0.1		
Dept of Education agency or groups formed by inter school alliances	26	1.6		
Teachers Federation	1	0.1		
External agency/person	14	0.9		
Principals' group district	1	0.1		
External (not CAP)	43			2.9
Unknown	554	36.7		
CAP with principal	4	0.3		
CAP with others	23	1.5		
CAP alone	25	1.7		
CAP + acting dept head	2	0.1		
CAP + ancillary	2	0.1		
CAP	56			3.7
Total	1509			

These data show that the principal (n = 162) made more recorded decisions than did department heads (n = 108) and individual teachers (n = 109) each considered collectively. The most frequent decision-makers were executive staff members acting individually (240/15.9 per cent of recorded decisions). The principal and individual teaching staff 10.7 per cent) were next most frequent as decision-makers. Staff groups made 10.3 per cent of all recorded decisions. Students (4 per cent), parents (1.7 per cent), and external agencies (2.9 per cent) made few recorded decisions. The relatively high proportion of unknown decision-makers resulted from the data collection procedures, namely identifying decisions from EGHS staff members reports as well as from CAP research team members observational records.

The high percentages of decisions made by the principal (10.7%), department heads acting individually (15.9%), and low percentages made by students (4%) and parents (1.7%) reflects also the N.S.W. scene as reflected in the national survey data in Table 5.4.

Further analyses of the 1509 recorded decisions were undertaken to examine participation in four different decision types. These are summarised in Table 5.14.

Table 5.14: Proportion of recorded decisions made by types of decision-makers, for type of decision (n = 1509)

Decision-Maker	Decision Type and Proportion of Recorded Decisions										TOTAL
	Intended Curriculum		Resource Use		Structure		Human Relationships		CAP		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Principal	10	6.2	47	29.0	30	18.5	70	43.2	5	3.1	162
Executive alone	32	13.3	61	25.5	36	15.0	97	40.4	14	5.8	240
Executive & others	8	16.7	15	31.2	6	12.5	19	39.6	-	0.0	48
Staff groups	54	34.0	36	22.6	14	8.8	54	34.0	1	0.6	159
Individual	30	18.6	29	18.0	21	13.1	61	37.9	20	12.4	161
External	17	39.6	9	20.9	13	30.2	3	7.0	1	2.3	43
Student	13	21.3	9	14.8	26	42.6	13	21.3	-	0.0	61
Parent	3	12.0	15	60.0	-	0.0	3	12.0	4	16.0	25
CAP	-	0.0	3	5.4	-	0.0	6	10.7	47	83.9	56
Unknown	132	23.8	179	32.3	110	19.9	124	22.4	9	1.6	554
TOTALS	299	19.8	403	26.7	256	17.0	450	29.8	101	6.7	1509

Some noteworthy features emerging from Table 5.14 were:

- Most of the decisions made by individuals or groups related to the human relationships sub-system of the school, the exceptions being external agencies (who made more decisions about the structure of the school), and parents (who made more decisions about resource use);
- Staff groups made as many decisions about the intended curriculum as they did about human relationships.
- External factors (39.6%) were responsible for more decisions about the EGHS intended curriculum than were any internal persons, including the principal the executive, or staff groups.

2. HOW WERE CURRICULUM DECISIONS MADE?

Items were included in the national survey related to providing the contexts in which curriculum decisions could be made. Information was sought concerning the convenorship and frequency of curriculum meetings. In the EGHS case study, data was also gathered concerning decision-making "styles". These styles were categorised as consensus/assumed consensus, individualistically or unilateral direction/request, and group/small group.

(a) Survey Results

Some evidence about how decisions were made could be gleaned from items related to meetings reported by respondents to the national survey. Teachers, department heads and principals were asked to indicate their perceptions about who convened curriculum decision-making meetings. The results are reported in Table 5.15.

Table 5.15: Perceptions of Conveners of Meetings to Discuss Curriculum, by Respondent (percentages of respondent group). (n = 584)

	RESPONDENT																		TOTAL					
	PRINCIPALS						DEPARTMENT HEADS						TEACHERS											
	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response
THE PRINCIPAL	27	35	31	7	-		45*	17	17	10	10		27	22	29	11	11		31	22	26	11	10	
A STAFF COMMITTEE	13	22	50	6	9		8*	14	31	26	20		11	23	30	16	21		10	21	33	17	19	
INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS	-	6	43	31	21		1	6	27	26	39		4	15	35	22	24		3	12	34	24	27	
STUDENTS	-	-	21	18	62		-	1	11	7	81		0	-	16	9	74		0	0	16	10	74	
PERSONS EXTERNAL TO THE SCHOOL	-	2	28	12	59		-	1	16	19	64		1	1	23	23	52		1	1	22	21	56	
OTHER HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS	6	9	78*	-	3	4	2	-	1	-	-	97	4	3	1	-	1	92	4	3	10	-	1	83

The principal was perceived as the most used convener of meetings to discuss curriculum. However, perceptions concerning meeting convenorship differed by respondent type, and differences are asterisked in Table 5.15. Department heads perceived convenorship differently from principals and teachers in almost every case.

Fuller analysis of the data reported Table 5.15 produced evidence of marked interstate differences, as reported in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16: Perceptions of Conveners of Meetings to Discuss Curriculum by State

	STATE																	
	NSW						VIC						QLD					
	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response
THE PRINCIPAL	40*	15	27	9	10		14	29	37	12	8		22	23	23	16	16	
A STAFF COMMITTEE	4	13	27	25	32		16*	37	32	6	9		5	16	36	17	27	
INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS	2	6	22	21	50		5	23	38	23	11		3	19	28	22	27	
STUDENTS	-	-	16	4	80		-	-	20	14	66		-	-	16	6	78	
PERSONS EXTERNAL TO THE SCHOOL	-	1	21	14	65		-	-	22	26	52		5	2	19	16	59	
OTHER HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS	4	3	8	-	-	85	1	1	12	-	-	86	6*	-	13	-	2	80

	STATE																	
	SA						WA						TAS					
	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response
THE PRINCIPAL	38	18	25	9	10		24	20	29	12	15		50*	28	12	7	3	
A STAFF COMMITTEE	16*	25	27	18	15		9	19	27	22	22		7	14	47	17	14	
INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS	2	13	35	26	25		7	32	33	24	24		-	8	46*	19	27	
STUDENTS	1	-	13	14	73		-	1	13	12	74		-	-	17	8	75	
PERSONS EXTERNAL TO THE SCHOOL	1	1	19	24	55		1	1	24	22	52		-	-	22	22	55	
OTHER HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS	2	1	12	-	1	84	8*	6	11	-	-	75	1	7	7	-	2	83

	STATE												TOTAL					
	ACT						NT											
	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response	Almost Always	Usually	Infrequently	Almost Never	Never	No Response
THE PRINCIPAL	14	23	36	23	5		17	25	33	8	17		31	22	26	11	10	
A STAFF COMMITTEE	18*	27	32	9	14		17	17	50	-	17		10	21	33	17	19	
INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS	-	5	27	36	32		17	-	58	25	-		3	12	34	24	27	
STUDENTS	-	-	9	14	77		-	-	25	-	75		0	0	16	10	74	
PERSONS EXTERNAL TO THE SCHOOL	-	-	32	18	50		-	-	42	17	33		1	1	22	21	56	
OTHER HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS	5	-	5	-	-	91	8	-	8	-	-	83	4	3	10	-	1	83

One noteworthy contrast between States (as shown in Table 5.16) was that whereas in N.S.W. and Tasmania the principal was perceived more frequently as the convenor, in Victoria, South Australia and A.C.T., a staff committee was perceived more frequently as convening curriculum decision-making meetings than in the national sample taken overall.

Data about the amount of time spent in school staff meetings on a range of topics indicated that almost all respondents (n = 550) perceived that "a lot or some" of the time was spent on internal administrative matters, whereas only half of the respondents perceived that "a lot or some" of the time was spent on curriculum matters.

Data sought concerning the frequency of school staff meetings convened specifically to discuss curriculum are reported in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17: Frequency of Meetings per term to Discuss Curriculum by State (n = 442)

School Meetings	State								
Number of Meetings	N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD.	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	ACT.	N.T.	TOTAL
0-1	65	48	66	32	68	33	26	20	48
2-6	31	28	30	48	24	55	42	60	38
7-12	3	19*	4	14*	2	11	26*	20	10
13+	1	5	-	6	6	1	6	-	4
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	n=65	n=75	n=47	n=87	n=66	n=73	n=19	n=10	n=442

Twenty percent or more respondents from Victoria, South Australia, A.C.T. and N.T. reported that at least seven meetings per term were held specifically to discuss curriculum. In the other states, meetings were much less frequent.

Table 5.18: Frequency of subject department meetings per term, to Discuss Curriculum, by State

Number of Meetings	N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD.	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	ACT.	N.T.	TOTAL
0-1	25	27	30	28	26	25	21	20	26
2-6	63	51	66	46	36	53	47	40	51
7-12	11	17	2	22	29	19	32	40	19
13+	1	5	2	4	9	3	-	-	4

It is apparent that subject department meetings are convened more frequently than school meetings to discuss curriculum. The findings presented in Tables 5.17 and 5.18 have important implications in terms of "whole curriculum" and compartmentalisation of curricula into subject areas.

(b) EGHS Case Study Data and Decision Making Styles

Observational and interview data from EGHS illustrated decision-making strategies. The 1509 recorded 1977 EGHS decisions were categorised in terms of decision-making "styles".

Table 5.19 reports data analyses related to decision-making styles.

Table 5.19: Proportion of recorded decisions, reported by decision-making style categories

Decision-making Style *	n	%	Total %
Unilateral	470	31.2	
Direction/request	49	3.3	
Individualistically			34.4
Handclasp	112	7.4	
Sub-group	4	0.2	
Small Group			7.7
Consensus	74	4.9	
Assumed consensus	11	0.6	
Acquiescence	10	0.6	
Consultation/straw vote	30	2.0	
Consensus			8.1
Unknown	751	49.8	49.8
TOTALS	1509	100.0	

* See Appendix B.6 for operational definitions.

Of the 1509 recorded decisions in 1977, 34 per cent were classified as being made individualistically, 8 per cent each by small groups and by consensus. For 50 per cent of recorded decisions, data was not available concerning decision-making style. In the ethnographic study, of those decisions for which the decision-making style was known, 69 per cent were made individualistically.

Table 5.20 reports data regarding the relationships between decision-making styles and types of decisions.

Table 5.20: Proportion of recorded decisions made by type of decision-making style, for type of decision (n=1509)

Decision-Making Styles	Decision Type and Proportion of Recorded Decisions										TOTAL	
	Intended Curriculum		Resource Use		Structure		Human Relationships		CAP			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Individualistic	60	11.6	113	21.8	83	16.0	215	41.4	48	9.2	519	100
Small Group	4	3.4	24	20.7	11	9.5	42	36.2	35	30.2	116	100
Consensus	47	38.8*	30	24.8	16	13.2	26	21.5	2	1.7	121	100
Unknown	188	25.0	236	31.3	146	19.4	167	22.2	16	2.1	753	100
TOTALS	299	19.8	403	26.7	256	17.0	450	29.8	101	6.7	1509	100

More of the consensus-style decisions were about curriculum whereas more individualistic and small-group style decisions were about human relationships, than about other aspects of the school. For approximately one-half of the recorded decisions, the style of decision-making was either not observed or unknown.

Eliminating from the analyses those decisions for which decision-making styles were not known, Table 5.21 reports the decision-making styles in relation to types of decision.

Table 5.21: Proportion of recorded decisions made by known type of decision-making style, for type of decision (n=1509)

Decision-Making Style	Decision Type and Proportion of Recorded Decisions										TOTALS	
	Intended Curriculum		Resource Use		Structure		Human Relationships		CAP			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Unilateral	60	54	113	68	83	75	215	76	48	56	519	69
Small Group	4	4	24	14	11	10	42	15	35	41	116	15
Consensus	47	42	30	18	16	15	26	9	2	3	121	16
TOTALS	111	100	167	100	110	100	283	100	85	100	756	100

A greater proportion of curriculum decisions were reported as having been made by consensus than were decisions about other aspects of the school.

(c) EGHS Case Study Data and Group/Individual Roles

To review further the questions of who made the curriculum decisions? and how were the decisions made? the CAP research team decided to document more fully six mini-case studies derived from EGHS. These six mini-studies illuminate decision-making strategies adopted at EGHS in "executive meetings", and in relation to decisions made concerning "pupil welfare", "thematic approach", "middle school module", a "parenting course", and the mathematics and social studies departments.

Decision-making in Executive Meeting

As a consequence of hunches which were developed during the observational and mapping period of 1977, the executive meeting became the focus of observation during 1978. It had become clear during 1977 that teachers and department heads perceived the executive meeting as a group of people who made decisions affecting the whole staff. One teacher referred to "the mythical they" when discussing an executive decision which led to reduced teaching hours in a subject. This teacher spoke about being "swamped by numbers". A department head's perceived role in executive meetings was stated thus:

> I need to defend my department --- need to be bloody-minded --- that's what department heads are paid for: the few making decisions. (Diary record 15.2.78)

Comments from the diary record of an interview with two teachers include:

> everyone gets representation on the executive meetings including the library and small groups; people feel they know what is going on;
>
> teachers did not feel they were being railroaded, although the executive seemed to make decisions; and
>
> the executive meeting was making decisions they weren't particularly interested in making anyway. (30.11.78)

It was decided to investigate the shared meanings about the phenomenon of executive meetings within the social system of the school.

Description

The executive meeting (also called meeting of heads of department, or masters' and mistresses' meeting), consisted of the principal, the deputy principal and department heads of those nine subject departments deemed by the N.S.W. Department of Education as large enough to have an executive teacher. Three smaller departments were represented by a "special master or mistress" (with department head status) who might or might notteach that subject. The librarian and mistress in charge of girls also attended executive meetings. By means of observations, discussions and interviews, the researchers developed several perceptions of the executive meetings.

They were seen as one of the few decision-making inter-disciplinary meetings in the school, and the only one in which all subject departments were represented. The weekly morning tea, attended by most staff members, was social in purpose although some announcements (largely administrative) were made.

It was expected that members of the executive meeting would convey information from the executive meetings to teachers in their subject departments.

The meetings were held during the lunch break, but generally continued beyond the bell indicating the commencement of classes. Some members ate their lunch during the meeting. There appeared to be no time pressure, by contrast with subject department meetings observed. In the four meetings observed, some members arrived late, others left early.

The atmosphere was friendly and informal. Seating was not formally arranged, and even when in a small classroom with chairs and desks, the principal did not take the centre "up-front" position facing the group across a desk. Humorous exchanges were frequent: "Do they want someone to carry the bags?" in response to the report of a student about to travel overseas. Although some joking was clearly of a "side-tracking" nature, there was a purposeful atmosphere.

This group of 15 people (8 men, 7 women), "representing" a staff of 74, was a regular, well-attended meeting. The meetings were perceived by others, and by its members to be carrying out important decision-making functions in the school.

Observation

Four executive meetings were observed in 1978. These comprised one in June, two in August, and a further one in August when the CAP researcher offered feed-back resulting from analyses of the previous three observations. Detailed notes were made of each meeting, and those of the first three were analysed in terms of; what decisions were made, who made them, how they were made, and the influences affecting them.

As well as the data from participant observation of meetings, there were also data from observations in the rest of the school, in the mapping and consultancy periods.

Content of Executive Meetings: (WHAT was discussed)

Issues discussed included both within-school and external factors. Analyses of observation notes on three meetings shows that approximately equal numbers of internal and external matters were raised. More time was spent on internal matters.

At one of the meetings (7.8.78), externally-initiated issues included Education Week, notification by the Education Department about changes in expected enrolment figures for 1979 and possible consequent staff reduction, a report from the Principals' Conference on the role of department heads, consultancy services of the Education Department, the Director-General's statement about teachers and smoking, and a statement from the Department of Education about the safety of asbestos in school buildings.

At the same meeting, internal issues included planning for the interdisciplinary display for Education Week, the welfare of some individual students, and rehearsal arrangements for a school drama performance.

Communication: informing others about the content of the meeting

The meeting was clearly part of the process of conveying information, requests and directives from external sources, and within the school.

Some members took notes for passing on information to teachers. However, not all subject departments had regular - let alone weekly - staff meetings. Furthermore, in some departments, it was not possible for all members to attend. At one departmental meeting, the department head was observed giving items of information. This meeting was held during lunch time, with a sense of haste evident, and with one member being absent. The research team sensed that, due to the above limitations on formal communication procedures, some communication was taking place on an informal basis within departments.

By July 1978, the executive meeting re-introduced the practice of duplicating and distributing weekly minutes for the rest of the staff. These minutes were relatively brief, occupying half of a foolscap-sized page. They provided an account which, although accurate, was not fully descriptive of the details of the executive meeting nor of the related discussions.

Some announcements were made at the weekly staff morning tea. However, since the stated purpose of that meeting was primarily social, the information conveyed was brief, and generally limited to whole-school issues of immediate importance. For example, the proposed school Walkathon was announced (Diary record 11.10.78).

Thus, although many issues were discussed during the executive meetings, - some of them at length - the later communication of the information was done under time constraints.

WHAT Decisions were made:

Although observations and diary records indicated that teachers, principal and department heads perceived the executive meeting as the location of decision-making that affected them, the analyses of data from observations of three executive meetings revealed that these perceptions were inaccurate.

At the meetings of 1.6.78, 3.8.78 and 10.8.78, a total of 33 decisions were recorded. Of these, only nine were made during the meetings, the remaining 24 having been made prior to the meetings. Of 19 issues discussed, 17 were announcements to the executive, and two were requests.

A further seven issues raised during these meetings remained unresolved, with no decisions having been made. These included: tidiness of classrooms and the necessity for teacher supervision before children enter them; problems about welfare of individual students; effects of altered future enrolment numbers; format of report forms for 1979; time wasted during roll call; and how to make sure students attend classes.

The lack of congruence between staff perceptions of the number and the actual number of decisions observed during the meetings, prompted much reflection by the CAP research team. These reflections resulted in questions being asked, namely:

- what was actually occurring at the executive level which might explain the perception that power resided in the executive meetings?
- how and where were decisions being made, if not at the executive meetings?

The first of these two questions was eventaully seen by the researchers to be closely related to two issues: the way the agenda for each meeting was constructed, and the ways by which power was achieved, both in the meeting and out of it. It was discovered that the agendas, and the way they were produced, were powerful though hidden influences on the levels of participation by members in the decision-making processes. It was further found that the group dynamics of the meeting itself were influencing the amount of participation in decision-making. The agenda will be discussed first:

The agenda, and the way it was produced:

The principal was usually observed as having a hand-written agenda. Members did not receive a duplicated copy. Members usually raised matters for consideration after the principal's list of items has been considered.

The analysis of a sample meeting (1.6.78) revealed that 23 items were raised. The principal had nominated 11 items, and of these, eight were announcements or directives. Three produced discussion. Concerning the 23 items, no decisions were made.

Six of the announcements were matters that had been previously decided. These decisions had been made not by the meeting as a whole, but by the principal, acting alone or with one other member of the executive. Two of these were announced by the relevant executive member, the remainder by the principal. In one case, the principal invited a member to make an announcement, whereupon the person gave details of decisions about preparations for the proposed drama performance. Many of these decisions would affect students and teachers in terms both of rehearsal time and of help needed in the production.

In the other of these two cases, there was much discussion of planning arrangements for Education Week, for which the major decisions had already been made. It appeared that members were providing details to be slotted into an already established plan. The relevant executive member, a department head, said:

> helped to clarify the nature of the display in the Hall, that it was a multi-disciplinary one . . . tied up with the multi-disciplinary work Betty had been doing . . . principal commented that there would be a great deal of work in the Hall, but some in the Library as well . . . the librarian said . . . didn't worry too seriously about the library being closed for the day.
>
> (observation notes of meeting 1.6.78)

Here the librarian's response appeared to be towards a decision already made, with the implication that this was a response to a request. Further as the nature of the display was similar to that of the previous year, it was assumed that the decision had been made outside this meeting.

These two items produced discussion and participation, but not the opportunity to take part in basic policy formation, and decision-making.

Of the two decisions that were actually made during the meeting, one came from an ad hoc initiative, in the form of a reaction to discussion begun in the Education Week planning and not previously planned. This was dealt with by an offer by an executive member to write a letter about furniture repairs. The other decision arose from the suggestion by the deputy principal that the practice of distributing minutes be re-instituted, resolved by one member offering to take minutes. The latter was an important communication decision affecting staff perception of what emanates from the executive meeting. Since it was put forward towards the end of the meeting, the observer inferred that the idea was "ad hoc", that is, it occurred to the proposer during the meeting, and was not planned ahead.

There were two information-seeking questions from individual members. In one case, an answer was given immediately concerning supplies of duplicating paper on hand.

The picture which emerged (and which is consistent with data in the other meetings observed) was one in which:

- the principal selected almost all of the agenda items,
- individual department heads did not come to the meeting with questions on issues coming from their department (with the exception of the question about paper supplies),
- few decisions were made during the meeting.

Significant decisions in terms of effects on the school were selected and the decisions made, before the meeting, either by, or in consultation with the principal. Thus, prior decisions became the agenda, in the form of a list of announcements, for discussion and perhaps development. They were not agenda for decision-making. This suggests that the executive meeting may be seen as having a legitimising or "rubber stamp" function.

In terms of "triangulation of data" as a reliability check upon participant observation, perceptions of members of the executive meeting are valuable. During the fourth meeting observed, in which the researcher gave some feedback about processes observed in previous meeting, and asked for their perceptions about influences affecting decision-making, one member

> went on to talk about the executive meeting and the principal's role, that it was really only the principal who made the decisions while taking note of the suggestions of department heads. There was some disagreement over this and the principal appeared to be a little taken aback and a trifle disappointed. The final statement from the discussion that followed was that they were all really involved in making decisions, but that the principal had the final say. They all seemed to go along with this.
>
> (observation notes 17.8.78)

The teachers' perceptions of members of the executive as having power was undoubtedly correct, but this power was exercised not as much in the executive meeting itself as in conferences between certain executive members with the principal. This was an example of the power that was available to whomever could achieve influence over what appeared on the agenda, since this determined the issues that might be discussed. Furthermore, the meeting itself was rendered more important if the issues were presented in the form of decisions already made.

Reinforcing the perceptions held by teachers of the power of the executive meeting was the significance of the information that emanated from it (irrespective of who made the decisions). These included directives about HSC prescribed texts, the supervisory role of department heads, plans for Education Week, Athletic Carnivals, and possible staff cut-backs due to decisions by the Education Department. Further, department heads were well informed about important issues and this possession and control of knowledge probably contributed to a sense of authority both in its possessors, and for those looking on, i.e., the teachers.

Consistent with the view of the importance and authority of the role of the executive were the comments of two teachers, stating that the executive meeting dealt with

> matters such as staff, which are too difficult for a general meeting (diary records 25.10.78) and
>
> things that teachers are not really interested in (diary records 30.11.78)

The mechanism by which previously-made decisions dominated the agenda could be interpreted as an unintentional side-effect of the principal's policy of "fanning a spark where you see it". This was beneficial to enthusiastic and able department heads and teachers, who gained much from such sponsorships for their innovative activities. However, the conferences between members of this elite and the principal, resulted in a reduction of productive consultation and decision-making in the gathering of all executive members. In fact, the members of this executive meeting suffered considerable disenfranchisement because of this situation.

Questions must be raised about what happens to staff members who are not part of the process of making decisions about issues in which they and their colleagues are involved, and who tend to become used to a passive role.

Influence of group dynamics on the amount of participation within the meeting

The research team sensed that the level of participation in decision-making was lower than might be expected in such a meeting, and that only some members participated in the "hand-clasp", i.e., sponsored decision-making outside the executive meetings. In view of this, the analysis of the processes of participation became important. It was clear that here, too, there was evidence of an imbalance in members' participation, amounting to what was a differential disenfranchisement.

Using the data from three meetings, a frequency count was made of the number of occasions on which members spoke. Obviously, the data are amenable to a variety of possible analyses (e.g., those dressed formally vs informality, relative ages of persons present). It was agreed that an analysis should be made on the basis of sex.

Ranking based upon the frequency count revealed that in each meeting, male members scored much higher, with few exceptions. The differences were wide. The only people whose comments were unheard by other members, were women. During discussion about activities for Open Day

> M, sitting at the side of the room, said, "We never seem to get around to teaching. Never. It's just hopeless." The comment received no attention at all, apparently. Then there was further discussion on Open Day. (observation notes, 10.8.78)

The principal, as chairperson, had the greatest number of interactions. It was also obvious to the observer that men made longer comments than did women. These tendencies were consistent over the three meetings, and the variation was greater than could be attributed to chance, as indicated in Table 5.22.

Table 5.22: Frequency count of verbal interactions in three observed meetings of executive staff in 1978

○ = female △ = male

n	First Meeting	n	Second Meeting	n	Third Meeting
20	Principal	37	Principal	31	Principal
15	△ Art	Many	△ Art	29	△ Special Master
11	△ Deputy	9	△ Library	12	○ Science
11	△ Library	4	○ Science	10	△ Maths
6	○ Special Mistress Master	4	△ Special Master	9	△ History
6	○ Science (one unheard)	3	△ Deputy	8	△ Deputy
6	△ Industrial Arts	3	△ Maths	4	○ Special Mistress
5	△ English	2	△ History	3	△ Library
4	○ Special Mistress	2	△ English	3	△ Industrial Arts
3	△ Maths	2	○ Languages	2	○ Home Science
3	○ Home Science	1	○ Home Science (one unheard)	1	○ Social Science
3	○ Social Science (one unheard)	1	△ Industrial Arts	0	○ Mistress i/c Girls
0	○ Mistress i/c Girls	1	○ Special Mistress		
	○ Languages	0	○ Social Science		
TOTALS 73	△ = 70%	32 + Art master's interaction	△ = 75%	81	Absent-Art/Languages △ = 77%

Two of the women who interacted little at the meetings and who at times were unheard, had been observed as capable and forceful (though supportive) in staff meetings in their own subject departments. In particular, they were observed as having developed some innovative procedures. Further, another of the "low-score" women had quietly achieved two important innovations, one of which involved winning the support of many other teachers.

Further perusal of the agenda items of the first meeting suggested a sexist division in the number and "weight" of items initiated by members. One woman introduced a question about paper supplies, the problem being resolved; one man reacted to another issue, an unresolved item. Ten other items were raised by men, including discussion of School Certificate results, document tabled, a joke which consumed considerable time, drama performance, format for a school diary, visitor to interview students announced, state of classrooms, question about Athletes Carnival, and the keeping of minutes. Of male contributions, several were "sponsored" by the principal.

It appeared that there was a sexist bias in terms of frequency and duration of interactions and the significance of issues raised for discussion.

Another factor besides sexism appeared to be influencing the frequency of verbal contributions. This was the perceived relative importance of subjects. It will be seen from the frequency count in Table 5.23 that where a woman had a high score, she was head of a high-prestige subject, e.g. science. Further analyses of the influence of perceived subject status in decision-making appears necessary.

Overview:

The executive meeting was perceived by the principal, department heads and teachers as a group of people exercising considerable power in the school in areas which affected the running of the school. This perception appeared to be related to the belief that important decisions were made at that meeting.

It appears, however, that the perception of its power related not to decision-making, but to the fact that important information was received by members of the executive, who gained power as a result of having access to and control of this knowledge, and were in the position of handing this knowledge on to others.

The executive meeting appeared to be prevented from functioning as a decision-making body by the procedures in which decisions were made outside the meeting. Participation in decision-making was reduced for the whole meeting by the pre-meeting actions of the elite with the principal.

Pupil Welfare

A further micro case study relates to the attempt of one person, Loma, to influence decision-making so as to place more emphasis upon pupil welfare. Loma was seen to have a low key personality, being patient, persistent and non-assertive in her approach. She was very concerned about pupil welfare. This responsibility was part of her designated role. At the beginning of 1977, she was new to the staff and to the level of responsibility, having just been promoted. No role description had been given to her to guide the way she interpreted that role, other than that she was responsible for both boys and girls, and should take charge of the sick bay or clinic. No priorities had been set by the principal. However, Loma stated she felt sure of the principal's support in whatever she undertook. She found this lack of direction difficult to cope with. Before she decided on her own role expectations, she attended inservice courses about student counselling and welfare. When asked by the principal to supervise adherence to the wearing of uniforms, she refused to "be policeman".

> She feels that many of the troubled children tend to display their rebellion in dress deviation and so, by chastising them, she may set up barriers between herself and the very children who may need her help at some time. Loma reported that she got this information from an inservice course about disturbed children.
> (field diary records).

On 27.7.77, an interview report stated that

> Whereas the school clinic used to dispense aspirins freely, she now knows (through the (inservice) meetings) that the official Department position is that these are drugs and cannot be given to students. On the basis of this information, Loma prepared a statement which was accepted unquestioned by the principal and which she, Loma, read out to the school; aspirin would not be given to students. (The requests have stopped.)

In this instance, Loma chose to make a decision in consultation with the principal and staff on the basis of information about her role, deliberately obtained, and influenced by an external agency, namely the Department of Education.

Loma reported an interest in teaching Personal Development classes as a way of "getting to know the students". Field diary notes recorded that she had decided to attend an inservice course on this topic and that in 1978 she joined the Personal Development staff team. "The job is being created" was one observer's comment.

On August 9, 1977, the CAP team observed the results of some of Loma's individualistic decision-making about students. A small group of girls was found smoking in the toilets. Loma sat down with them to get information about the way students behaved in the toilets, discovering that the results of vandalism in the toilet area were seen to encourage lack of concern for appearance, tidiness etc. She asked what they would do about it. They suggested painting the toilet area in bright colours, with murals on walls and doors. Loma consulted the principal about getting funds to buy paint, according to the colours chosen by these girls. She then gave them the responsibility for repainting the area.

On 14.9.77 field diary notes recorded:

> (Loma) reported that the seminar was about drugs then she said that she had a copy of the leaflet of information that was available for staff members. Part of the course was about self-esteem. It was important for both students and teachers. Part of it was about counselling; she mentioned that they had a workshop on counselling as well as the lecture and that she herself had got a low score. There was a murmur of laughter at this.

On 8.11.77, Loma discussed with an observer a meeting she had called to discuss student welfare.

> I asked her how she had come to the decision to hold the meeting. She said that she and three other staff members who had attended the in-service course ... had decided among themselves to have a meeting at which other staff members who were interested could share ideas about counselling at the school. (field diary notes).

Here a "handclasp" decision made by a small group, including Loma, had resulted in a decision to consult with other interested staff members, extending the decision-making style towards more participation.

At the meeting that followed that day, attended by the principal and at least nine other staff members, Loma raised the possibility of holding fortnightly meetings of staff for discussing student welfare issues, and communicating about students' needs in a teamwork approach. She stated: "Perhaps my job is mainly administering to arrange meetings like this." She indicated that she met with the part-time School Counsellor each Wednesday to discuss student welfare. The issue of fortnightly meetings was not decided at the meeting due to time constraints. The observer at this meeting noted Loma's low-key, non-assertive approach.

On 12.7.78, Loma announced at a staff morning tea that a student welfare meeting would be held two days later, the decision already having been made. On 23.8.78, it was recorded in a field diary that this meeting was to be postponed until Term 3. On 2.9.78 at a CAP staff consultation meeting, Loma responded to staff comments about needing to meet student interests by urging them to attend the lunch-time meeting during the week, when newly-instituted faculty meetings were to be held. At the Student Welfare Group meeting on 27.9.78, three speakers were present, including one from another school which was trialling vertical student groupings. On 25.10.78 at a staff morning tea, Loma announced a lunch-time meeting of those interested in vertical groupings. Loma had already consulted other teachers individually and the principal about the idea. If 80 per cent of these were in favour, she intended to put a formal proposal to the meeting. By 1.11.78, a proposal was put to staff at their Wednesday morning tea to introduce "vertically structured pastoral care groups from Years 7 to 12", with 20 students in each, meeting with one teacher for 15 minutes each morning. Loma quoted statements from the CAP consultation meeting in urging people to become involved.

One comment was "What's this 15 minutes of welfare?" to which Loma responded, "Children should learn to care for others." Despite the one voice of scepticism, the scheme was observed in operation at the beginning of 1979. Informally, students reported dissatisfaction to one of the CAP team that they hadn't liked the idea, not having been consulted.

These examples indicate that Loma increasingly adopted a consultative approach with staff, beginning with interested individuals, extending to an "ad hoc" voluntary group and then to the total staff, allowing people to be involved in decision-making without any apparent haste or pressures, so allowing time for reflection. Even though the broad issue to be discussed was clearly stated as "student welfare", the definition of the task occurred progressively, responding to information from outside sources, sometimes deliberately collected. Because the issue was pupil-related and outside the scope of particular subject departments, it necessitated an integrative, teamwork approach across the school. Loma's consultative and later consensus-generating approach to decision-making was congruent with the task. This approach facilitated decisions about and implementation of action. Loma's leadership style grew from one of quiet hesitancy to quiet confidence, and her role from lack of definition to facilitator of people and processes in an open-ended approach. Perhaps because others were consulted, they were committed to and supportive of the decisions made.

Early in the observational period, the CAP team did not perceive Loma as a person likely to influence curriculum decisions, although her role as mistress-in-charge of girls needed to be documented because it could illustrate influences on decision-making. On later tracing back through the observational evidence to contrast different approaches to decision-making, and on reflection by the CAP team concerning Loma's approach, the approach was identified as an example of a very effective, unobtrusive participatory process. She kept the major task of pupil welfare in mind, but had no preconceived notion of how it would be achieved or how long it would take. She had as much time as was needed, without the self-interest that is sometimes associated with an approaching inspection for promotion purposes. She capitalised on the presence of the outside observers and the opportunities made during the consultative staff meetings, for her to gain staff support and information from inservice courses about alternative approaches linking an apparently background problem of pupil welfare with a nominated foreground one of people relationships and communication in the school. This case study is included as an illustration of the importance of consultation and participation for implementation of decisions.

Thematic Approach

Betty operated in a fairly low key manner. She was vital, attractive young and ambitious.

The principal commented:

> Betty was a very good person at working in the school. She was good at getting people involved. Although she was very gentle she managed to get people willing to work with her. (field diary records)

She was preparing for an inspection for promotion during 1978. During 1977, she had been trying to develop some thematic approaches in the school curriculum, on an individual basis. During the year, extra staff had been appointed to relieve some staff members of duties for a period of time to plan an integrated theme called "Animals" for 1978.

At a staff morning tea in March 1978, Betty announced a meeting for those interested in implementing an interdisciplinary theme on animals. Science, Geography, History, and Art had already indicated an interest. Almost a month later (5.4.78), there was an announcement at a staff morning tea:

> I'm trying to see ways of developing interdisciplinary activities. The idea is to see where different subject areas are doing the same topic. The aim is then to develop a joint program. I will put a sheet in the staff pigeonholes about this. At the moment I have discovered that there are overlaps with topics like Asia, Photographs, Animal themes, Australia and the Pacific. One aim would be to get integrated displays on Open Day. There is a meeting lunch time Monday. (field diary records).

On the same day in an interview with a CAP team member, Betty reported that arrangements had been made for a liaison officer for the CDC curriculum "Pacific Circle" project to attend the Monday meeting. Betty had already attended an inservice event about this project.

At the meeting (10.4.78), there were representatives from Library, Commerce and Social Science, Science, Home Economics, Maths, English, History, English as a Second Language, and Physical Education, making 14 in all. Tea, coffee and cake were provided by Betty for the meeting. The CDC staff person explained the project in terms of introducing multidisciplinary themes. Information was exchanged by staff members on Pacific themes already "treated" in the various subject areas, the time needed to cover a theme, and the library resources available. A CAP observer at the meeting commented on Betty's facilitative style of leadership, helping people to share ideas. Early in the meeting, nine ways in which subject areas could contribute to a Pacific theme were identified by various staff members.

Observers attended a later meeting (May 1978) where many alternatives for action were generated. Suggestions for aims, content, organisation and Year level were made, together with ways of obtaining time for planning, teacher release and resources. By the end of the meeting, there was an assumed consensus about a theme, year level and the next stage of planning.

By 31.5.78, staff were informed of a further meeting to discuss possible programming for 1979 for Pacific integrated studies. At a Masters and Mistresses Meeting on 1.6.78, a multidisciplinary display for Education Week was also discussed.

The multidisciplinary display was held on August 23, 1978. The District Inspector was invited by the principal to attend. "Betty works very hard", the principal stated.

On 1.11.78, the field diary recorded:

> Betty ... is organising two periods off to get those interested to a meeting to work on plans. This includes 10 staff from the areas of English, Library, Science, Social Science, Art, Home Economics.

This development of a thematic approach again illustrates a participatory decision-making style, using a voluntary "ad hoc" group for a specific task, working through (from individualistic and consultative decisions) to a consensus style. The issue began as a broad concern for providing integration between and avoiding overlap in subject areas of the curriculum. It developed by involving interested people, sharing of ideas and information from many sources, to a point where goals were agreed and more specifically stated, plans for implementation suggested and acted on. Key characteristics of the process seemed to be frequency of meetings, lack of time pressures to reach a conclusion yet persistence, time for reflection, appropriate use of information sometimes deliberately collected, and a gradual narrowing down of the broad issue to a specific content-oriented concept of a theme, rather than a structural reorganisation of the curriculum. This demanded small changes made voluntarily by interested staff who made and implemented the decisions. The traditional subject areas remained largely undisturbed while the theme became the vehicle for allowing communication across and co-operation between subject areas. There was no documented evidence of deliberate evaluation of each thematic approach as it was implemented, though some incidental feedback about the "Animals" theme was noted. This indicated that support from the principal and information from external influences were factors supportive of the processes of implementation.

Middle School Module

The initiator of an idea for restructuring Years 8 and 9 was Gavin. He was an articulate, creative, assertive, intellectual extrovert with quite a charisma. Gavin was a master of some years experience who had been at the school for three years. He had been given many extra responsibilities beyond his subject area, and had been involved in several innovations in the school, especially for additional approved studies, thematic studies and craft electives.

Observational records in 1977 indicated that Gavin was perceived as fairly individualistic in his approach to decision-making in the subject department.

> Gavin's good with numbers and political battling ... gets fantastic things ... walks around the school and is alert. (field diary records).

He was reportedly a good organiser of resources and people. He considered that he could gain status as a department head by expanding the "turf" of the department and building up a "sense of department" (e.g. he acquired an urn and electric drill). Also, by getting more students, he could also acquire another room for the department.

At the same time, this would allow him to go to bigger and better things by expanding into the school executive. Gavin also sought to get longer periods on the timetable for his own subject. However, such "wheeling and dealing" did not prove effective in changing the organisational structure at school level. The principal reported that Gavin had been asked to "keep an eye on Years 8 and 9".

In April 1978, Gavin distributed to staff members a survey of opinion on staff concerns, containing some structured and some open-ended questions, known as the "If" document. (This document is found in Appendix). By 24.5.78 he had received 13 responses from a staff of more than 70. He analysed these replies, identifying the middle school as the major concern. He reported to staff, at a staff morning tea, that

> as the result of that information he had done some work. He had ... rearranged the subjects for these two years ... (to promote) an interdisciplinary approach. (field diary records).

Gavin developed a diagram displaying this proposed reorganisation and

> suggested that those who were interested should join him and become a task force which would work on this. (Field diary records).

At the same staff meeting

> He already had a document out for people to look at but it wasn't what he called a fait accompli. It was merely a working paper that was inviting inter-departmental cooperation. When he asked for a committee he joked that "the best committee was a committee of three with one absent and one dead". He would hope to have something ready for working with by the beginning of Term 3.
> (Field diary records).

Gavin's plan basically was for a core of "initial compulsory courses followed by elective courses and then extension courses". The plan involved a major reorganisation of the curriculum and depended upon members from other departments to share their expertise in course planning.

By 7.6.78 the proposal was displayed on notice boards in the staff common room. Large spaces were provided for staff to write their ideas or comments, paper and pencils being provided. One staff member was heard by a CAP observer to comment that she found the display very difficult to understand.

When asked by a CAP member how people were responding to his proposal, Gavin drew attention to reactions to change, a small number being against, a small number for and a large majority "which would accept anything if handed them 'as a package'." Gavin indicated that his proposal was to

> ... prune down English, Maths and Science to the bare essentials. Then with the time and teachers freed, three developments could occur:
>
> (a) remedial classes for those not coping;
>
> (b) advanced work for those very competent;
>
> (c) what he called "enrichment" classes.
>
> There would also be time to do activities initiated by the student.
> (Field diary records).

On 28.6.78 Gavin reported to a CAP team member on the difficulty of finding time for "all the organising", both by himself and the other interested teachers. He felt the need for this group to have a "weekend away somewhere or something" to do the work.

> The only hope he could see for getting it organised was that a final year trainee teacher was coming to the school soon and this may free *him* to get the time to do *all* the organisation. "You have to be a bit autocratic to get some things done", he said *sotto voce*.
> (Field diary records).

A CAP observer noted on 3.8.78 that some staff comments had been added to his display, but that the diagram had been removed. On 27.9.78, the principal commented on the lack of constructive staff comments about Gavin's proposal, but added that one staff member was now working with him on the project. By 11.10.78, Gavin reported to a CAP team member that the middle school module

> would come into effect but not nearly to the extent that he had hoped ... He was quite sure that it was very difficult to make this sort of (philosophical) change in teachers. (Field diary records).

In 1979, students in Year 9 were organised to study a core of subjects and to have choice regarding the remaining subjects.

This mini-case study illustrates a unilateral decision to initiate an issue. The specific dilemma was identified from a small sample of opinion obtained deliberately but almost exclusively from a pencil and paper survey, developed individually. After the idea for solving the dilemma was fully developed, again individually and rapidly, there was persuasive contact with other staff, permission being granted by Gavin to comment mainly in writing on wall charts and through a meeting. There is no record of this meeting having occurred, except as a duo. There seemed to be little follow-through on making the implementing decisions about when meetings were to be held or what preparations should be made for such meetings. The decision-making style was initially unilateral and directive. As time passed the processes were not extended beyond minimally consultative or participative styles. The major approach to consultation was through exchange of pieces of paper rather than through interpersonal, face-to-face contact. Information used was from a small sample of opinion. The idea was the result of one individual's creative, problem-solving ability, carried out in a highly intellectual fashion, communicated in a complex way and explained seemingly only on request.

There is no record of who initially made the decision to implement the modification or how that decision was made. Despite the initial speed in producing a solution, the total process was no shorter than other concurrent innovative attempts which took longer to develop to concrete plan stage, and involved more people in decision-making.

The potential innovator waited for other people to make the approach. For whatever of these reasons, the innovation was only minimally implemented.

Parenting Course at EGHS

(Note: An earlier version of this mini-case study was developed by Jennifer Godfrey as part of her M.A. program at Macquarie University. She collected her data from four interviews with the Personal Development Co-ordinator and a visit to one of the P.D. classes).

Anna was the Personal Development (P.D.) Co-ordinator at Eucalypt Grove High School. She has been doing this job as part of her teaching duties since she was asked by the Principal to do it in 1975. A course in "Parenting" was offered as part of the P.D. program for students in Year 10 (aged about 16).

The P.D. courses had been running as a valued part of the EGHS curriculum since 1974.

They follow the guidelines given in the N.S.W. Department of Education's Statement of Principles "Personal Development in Secondary Schools" (1974), and the course content for Years 7-10 was set out in the Department's outline. In 1977 a new P.D. course for Year 10 "Minimal Skills" was begun, and the Parenting Course (subject of this mini-case study) was one part of this Minimal Skills course.

Initiative for the Parenting Course

(a) The Minimal Skills Course: At the end of 1976, the Principal decided that a course in "Minimal Skills" might be more relevant to Year 10 students than their conventional P.D. program. P.D had been offered to Year 10 students for three years and they were losing interest in their traditional program. There was a shortage of staff to teach the Year 10 P.D. in 1977. A program of talks by visiting speakers concerning skills it was thought that students might see as highly relevant was perceived as a way to tackle these problems.

The course itself was planned and organised by the Personal Development Co-ordinator. The skills chosen were Resuscitation, Driver Education and Survival. The course began in Term 1, 1977 with each skill being taught for one term.

The "Minimal Skills" course was not easy to implement. Anna had difficulty finding speakers prepared to visit the school and/or who could be relied upon to arrive at the appointed time. She persuaded an interested member of the EGHS staff to take the Survival course; the Resuscitation course was given by St. John Ambulance; but by mid-term 1, 1977, it was becoming obvious that the Driver Education course would have to be abandoned.

(b) An Inservice Course: In April 1977, Anna was chosen to attend a three-week, full-time inservice course "Training of Resource Personnel in Personal Development". She found that two of the speakers at that course were particularly impressive, namely:

(1) an inner-city social worker who referred to the growing popularity of unmarried motherhood and the alarming increase in the number of toddlers abandoned by their unmarried mothers;

(2) a member of the Nursing Mothers' Association who spoke of the Association's role in developing parent awareness, and outlined a course "For Tomorrow's Mums and Dads".

At the time of this inservice course, there was much discussion in the media, stimulated by visiting psychiatrist Dr. Liebanne Densen-Gerber, about the effects of poor parenting and the need for better parent education.

These three factors stimulated Anna's concern for better human relationships. Realising that most of her students were fairly ignorant about parenting, Anna decided to take the abandonment of the Driver Education course as an opportunity to introduce a "Parenting" course. She discussed this with the principal, who considered it highly desirable, and further suggested developing a Parenting course as a course of "Approved Study" for students in Years 11-12.

The course outline does not contain a statement of objectives, but Anna reported that she had four very clear objectives throughout the planning and implementation of the course. She designated these as:

(1) to increase students' knowledge of child development and care.

(2) to develop an awareness of the often difficult reality of being a parent;

(3) to give students some direct experience of children and their parents;

(4) to develop further the humanistic atmosphere of the school.

The emphasis in the course was not on giving students skills such as bathing a baby, but rather on developing their awareness of the realities of parenting.

The topics considered were essentially the same as those in the course outline proposed by the Nursing Mothers' Association. Members of the

Association with their babies were invited to visit the school to help present the course.

After encouraging Anna to begin the course, the Principal went on leave, leaving the organisation of the course to Anna, who was quite inexperienced in this area. The Acting Principal, however, gave practical help with the organisation of rooms and securing formal Departmental approval for the course. The Acting Principal insisted that as well as the course outline (which mentioned a demonstration of breast-feeding), a separate letter be sent to parents requesting permission for students to attend the course.

No parent disapproved student attendance at the course. Some parents whose children were not scheduled to do the course in Term 11 actually requested that their children do the course. The planning process was completed by the end of May, 1977, and the course began in Term 11. The six sessions are described briefly below:

Session 1

A. Bathing a Baby: An 'ice-breaker' for the group. A time for talking to, touching, and playing with baby, giving loving assurance. Two mothers and their babies will be present to discuss: general practical care, clothing and equipment, safety precautions, and physical/sexual differences.

B. Breast Feeding: After the baby is bathed and changed, the mother will breast feed the baby in front of the group. Topics for discussion include: who can breastfeed? physical and emotional benefits to mother and child, 2-way learning process and 'getting to know you', the importance of father's support, and convenience and economic factors.

Session 2

Growth and Development: Two mothers and their young children will give this session. Topics include: growth and development of newborn, older baby, toddler and preschooler.
Great individual differences in weight gain, commencement of educational diet and weaning, appetite of toddlers vs. nutritional feeding, age at which skills are achieved, importance of safety in the home, and behavioural differences/mothering a toddler.

A film from the "Ages and Stages" Series on Child Development will be shown at the end of session. Ten students this session will visit a local Kindergarten as a 'Practical Session'. They will be given a particular task to complete this session.

Session 3

Planning for Baby: Why? physical, mental, social and economic aspects; material needs of baby and mother; hospitalisation. A film from the "Ages and Stages" Series to be shown. Another group of ten to visit the local Kindergarten.

Session 4

Care of Mother: Topics include: pregnancy and post natal period; diet; rest; exercise and clothing. A film to be shown and another ten students to visit Kindergarten.

Session 5

Family Relationships: Topics include: Motherhood - a new role; Fatherhood - a new role; importance of Mother/Father Rest of family relationships; father's support, protection, assistance, and guidance most important; father's needs; a working mother - her skills and her problems.
It is hoped to have a father talking to the group at this session. A film will be viewed, and a further ten students to visit Kindergarten.

Session 6

Motherhood - A personal view: This session will be conducted by a former Mistress-in-charge of girls at this school. She will have recently had a baby and will bring her two year old child Bronwyn along to the session, as well as her new baby boy Gwyn.

Implementation of the Course:

Students in Year 10 were divided into three mixed sex groups of 70. Each group had six lessons in one skill each term. Students who had Driver Education in Term 1 did not attend Parenting classes since they replaced Driver Education.

Students in groups of 70 heard an informal talk by a member of the Nursing Mothers' Association, with demonstrations by other mothers and babies. Films on child development were shown after each talk. Small groups of students visited the local kindergarten to observe the children. At the end of each session, students were given the opportunity to stay back and hold the babies.

The large number of students in the hall made more active involvement impossible. Anna tried to maintain an informal atmosphere and relate the talks to the real lives of the students. There were often contributions from other interested teachers on the staff, from ex-teachers with children and from visitors to the school.

Evaluation:

There was no formal evaluation of the students. For curriculum evaluation purposes, Anna sought and used feedback from students in shaping the future of the course. Although initially embarrassed, students were enthusiastic about the course. Many stayed to handle the babies and talk with the mothers. Whether the course raised the consciousness of Year 10 students is difficult to assess. It appeared to have definite effects on the morale of the students. They reported feeling "well looked after" by being given a special course to meet their needs, and this had a beneficial effect on general attitudes to school.

Evaluation of the course content:

The films used in Term 1 were found to be inappropriate. New, more modern films were located. More effective visits to the kindergarten resulted when control was exercised over students. A headlice plague made students unwelcome at the kindergarten during Term 2. The visits were restructured in Term 111.

Future of the Course:

Despite the constraints resulting from the large number of students and lack of opportunity for varied and active learning experiences, the course was considered to be successful. Changes suggested for the second year included:

> a more "balanced" presentation of parenthood by using more fathers, and by giving positive and negative aspects; use of smaller groups of students to provide more direct experience with children.

The Principal's suggestion to develop an expanded course for Year 11 and 12 was not followed by Anna, who did not want sole responsibility for planning and submitting for approval such a course.

Anna reported that the greatest difficulty in implementing an innovation such as the parenting course (which required organisation, use of the school hall and some changes of routine) was that the school itself lacked the flexibility needed to deal with regular visiting speakers.

Conclusion

The EGHS Parenting Course was a "grassroots" innovation. Other than the general 1974 "Statement of Principles" providing the broad course guidelines, the N.S.W. Department of Education had minimal involvement. Even seeking Education Department approval for the course was described by the Principal as "a mere formality". Anna had major responsibility for the course. She planned, implemented and evaluated the course.

The roles of the principals have been interesting. A change in principal just before the planning process began could have threatened the progress of the course. In fact, the departing principal, a provider of inspiration, left to allow the acting principal, who was described as a more practical person, to help the innovation by interpreting the Department's requirements and helping Anna who was inexperienced in organisational matters.

The course continues to operate, with some success, due to the drive and enthusiasm of Anna.

The "Parenting" mini-case study highlighted the following influences on the decision-making processes at EGHS:

(1) timetable and staff considerations were significant in the decision to have the course;

(2) the inservice course played a crucial role as a source of motivation for Anna, the P.D. Co-ordinator;

(3) there was almost no involvement of students or parents in planning the course;

(4) with the exception of the principal, no other staff member was involved at any stage of the course.

Decision-Making in Two Subject Departments

An additional mini-case study was conducted at EGHS during 1977 by two Macquarie University postgraduate students, namely Del Russell and Kay Roberts. It involved the mathematics and social science departments.

In N.S.W. at Year 10 level in 1977, attempts were made to make inter-school comparisons in mathematics via what was known as a "moderation system". This involved students in Year 10 undertaking an externally-set examination. On the basis of the overall results achieved within each school, schools were then ranked and allocated specific numbers of various "grades" (A, B, C,) which they could then award to students for their School Certificate (Year 10 award). These grades were then awarded according to within-school rankings based upon whatever assessment methods the school chooses to apply. It was thought by the CAP researchers that preparation for moderating tests might have influenced curriculum decision-making patterns. It was further thought that this might show up differences in influences upon curriculum decision-making between a "moderated" department (mathematics) and a "non-moderated" department (social science).

Within the Mathematics Department, two-thirds of the course content or "core" content was in 1977 prescribed by the NSW Department of Education syllabuses. The Year 10 moderating examination was based upon this prescribed work. It was therefore thought that subject departments might have been heavily influenced by this moderating exam. The assessment for the remaining one-third of the course (called the "balance of the course") was left to the discretion of the teachers. The "Notes on the Syllabus in Mathematics" stated that

> The balance of the course provides schools with the opportunity to plan to cater for the needs, interests, and abilities of each individual pupil.

This mini-case study involved planned interviews with the department head and four other teachers in each of the two departments. Interviews were conducted during school hours to suit the convenience of the teachers. Detailed notes of the interviews were written subsequently by the respective interviewer. Information was freely volunteered and interviewees were described as "most cooperative and willing".

The Mathematics Department at Eucalypt Grove High School was found to adhere rigidly to the syllabus prescribed by the NSW Department of Education. This "core" work took precedence in teaching sequence. Once completed, teachers either extended the study of the core, or pursued topics outside the core. Within-school curriculum decisions were limited to the sequencing of the material and to evaluation of outcomes. The timetable restricted department meetings to recesses and lunchtimes as the only "free" time common to all

Mathematics teachers. Meetings to discuss sequencing and administrative matters were held usually twice a term, being called on an "ad hoc" basis. Individual teachers made their own decisions concerning teaching methods for their own classes, sometimes after discussions within departmental meetings. The topics in the "balance of course" area were offered according to interests and competences of the individual teachers, and then selected by the students.

Students were given two mathematics tests per term on the core work. The test was common to all students in each class of the Year. Teachers took turns at devising the tests, which were then circulated to each Mathematics teacher as a check that all classes have completed the work to be examined. Consultation between teachers about the test then took place before students "sat" the tests. Based on their performances, students were allocated a mark out of forty. Class teachers awarded each student a mark out of the remaining 60 per cent using their teacher judgements.

In 1977, the moderation syllabus for the Social Science Department (although still "in existence") for the first time became no longer prescriptive. With their new autonomy to change the content (radically if they wished), the EGHS Social Science teachers chose to develop a new curriculum for Years 7-8 in 1977 as a first step. Student evaluation was by means of across-the-year common tests administered once each term. The Social Science tests were devised by teacher consultation and group consensus. Within-class marks were allocated to each student on the basis of other teacher judgements such as project work.

Timetabling made Social Science Department meetings difficult to schedule. However, fortnightly meetings (mainly dealing with administrative matters) were held. In addition, a full-day meeting was held in 1977 as a result of an exchange with the Science Department. At that meeting, curriculum change for Years 9-10 was discussed, and decisions were made by consensus.

In 1977, interviewees in both the Mathematics and Social Science Departments reported no influence from and a lack of communication with the community. The Principal, the Deputy Principal and other school departments were perceived as having no influence upon curriculum decision-making within the two departments.

Differences between student influences were reported for the two departments. It was reported that the prescriptive nature of the Mathematics syllabus precluded student influence, whereas some of the Social Science teachers reported that student interests greatly influenced their content selection.

The availability or otherwise of resources, materials and ancillary help, and the physical layout of the school, were not perceived as constraints. Shortages of duplicating paper towards the end of the school year created difficulties as teachers sometimes preferred to develop their own materials tailored to their planned curricula. The assembly hall could be booked for large-scale activities. Large classes were reported as restricting small-group work. Timetable rigidity was perceived as interfering with the "flow of work". The Mathematics Department reported interference from excursions and out-of-school work experience. Both department heads were perceived as democratic and it was perceived that curriculum decisions were reached through discussion and consensus. All teachers perceived harmonious working relations. The time available for departmental staff meetings was considered inadequate, hence discussions were limited. At the meetings held, administrative decisions outnumbered curriculum decisions.

Teachers perceived common tests as restricting their choice of content and sequence. However, they considered that such norm-referenced assessment was beneficial, especially as a preparation for external examinations.

The moderating examination had considerable influence upon the decisions about content and other learning experiences in the Mathematics Department. By contrast, the Social Science Department derived its own common test after the learning experiences had been planned and implemented. Testing as a form of evaluation had a dominant influence upon student life, especially in the Mathematics Department.

Despite its necessarily restricted scope, this mini-case study highlighted:

(a) the perceived dominance of the moderation system in curriculum decision-making;

(b) continuing major influence of prescribed syllabuses of the Secondary Schools' Board on the scope, content and sequencing in the curriculum;

(c) relative lack of communication between departments within EGHS;

(d) lack of influence of parents, the community, students, the principal and deputy principal upon curriculum decision-making within subject departments;

(e) despite the inadequacy of time for meetings, group discussion and consensus remain as important aspects of curriculum decision-making within subject departments.

3. SUMMARY

In relation to "who participated in decision-making?", survey data indicated that principals, department heads and teachers are perceived as having a lot or some participation in various curriculum decisions within their classroom control. For decisions beyond their own classrooms, significant percentages of teachers reported little or no participation in decisions such as timetabling and teacher allocations, as well as for decisions concerning the "total program of individual students".

Principals perceived themselves as participating "a lot/some" in many curriculum areas, especially the "ongoing evaluation of school program", and "teacher allocations" but not in "teaching methods".

Generally, about three-quarters of respondent principals, department heads and teachers reported being "very satisfied" or "moderately satisfied" concerning a range of curriculum decision areas related to their planning and teaching.

In general, parents and students were perceived as having very little or no participation in a variety of school-level curriculum decisions and as exercising little or no authority.

Department heads were the group perceived by the highest percentages of respondents (especially by principals but also by department heads and teachers) to exercise substantial authority over curriculum decision-making. Interestingly, all respondent groups attributed greater authority to the group to which they belonged, than to themselves "personally". This reinforced the "somebody else controls the ballgame" syndrome. When re-analysed on a state basis, a number of interstate differences emerged. The Education department/external exam bodies were seen by substantially greater percentages of respondents in N.S.W., Queensland and W.A. to exercise "substantial/some" authority, by contrast to A.C.T., Victoria, and N.T. Teachers were seen by far greater percentages of respondents to exercise "substantial/some" authority in Victoria, A.C.T., and N.T.

"All teachers in the department jointly" and department heads were the groups most often perceived as the persons responsible for curriculum decisions within their departments such as selection of curriculum materials, objectives, content, assessment methods, implementation of new or modified programs, and evaluation of the departmental programs.

Individual teachers were the persons most responsible for teaching methods, selecting equipment and materials, while principals were perceived as the most responsible group for "use of rooms and other teaching areas".

Reviewing the EGHS case study data, the executive (including the principal, deputy and department heads) acting alone or with others totalling about 35% and staff groups (34%) made many decisions about the intended curriculum, but external decision-makers (40%) exceeded these groups.

The national survey showed the principal as the most usual convener of meetings to discuss curriculum. In Victoria, South Australia, A.C.T. and N.T., at least seven meetings per term were held to discuss curriculum for 20% of the respondents, with much lower frequencies for the other states.

EGHS data showed that for curriculum decisions where the style was known, most decisions were being made by consensus.

To examine further the questions of "who made curriculum decisions" and "how", a series of six reports of mini-case studies was extracted from the ethnographic study at Eucalypt Grove High School.

(a) The executive meetings were perceived by the staff as the locus of considerable power, arising from a belief that crucial decisions were made at these meetings. The reality was that its members derived power from being given information at these meetings, which they then controlled. The actual decisions were generally made informally prior to the meetings, and often either by the principal acting either alone or with one other executive member.

(b) Pupil Welfare: This illustrated the importance of the approach adopted by Loma for effective impact on the curriculum. Loma's approach involved consultation and obtaining staff participation in decision-making.

(c) Thematic Approach: Betty used a participatory decision-making style to establish an "ad hoc" group of people, effectively cutting across subject department boundaries.

(d) Middle School Module: Gavin tried to involve others in a major reorganisation of curriculum by having them fill in a questionnaire, and by displaying his proposal on the staff common-room notice-board. He saw himself as doing "all the organising". His decision-making style was unilateral and directive. He failed to obtain participation, and his ideas were only minimally implemented.

(e) Parenting Course: Anna, the Personal Development Course Co-ordinator, was encouraged by the Principal to begin a course in "Parenting". Anna planned, implemented and evaluated the course without the involvement of any other teachers, or parents or students. An inservice course provided the background, and the timetable was significant in providing the time.

(f) Decision-Making in Two Subject Departments: This illustrated the continuing major influence of the prescribed (external) syllabuses of the Secondary Schools' Board, and the dominant effect of an external exam in Mathematics teaching (even although the exam was only a moderating device).

In Social Science, content selection was reportedly influenced by student interests, but the prescriptive nature of the Mathematics syllabus coupled with the external examination, precluded any school-based initiative in this curriculum area.

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS: WHAT FACTORS (EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL) ARE PERCEIVED AS INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKING?

The third key question explored in both survey and ethnographic studies was "what factors (external and internal) are perceived as influencing decision-making?"

1. FACTORS EXTERNAL TO THE SCHOOL

(a) Survey Data

Principals, department heads and teachers were asked to provide information about their perceptions of influences, both internal and external to the school, upon curriculum decision-making within the school and, for teachers and department heads, within their departments.

It could be hypothesised that the purported shift to school-based curriculum decision-making and the implied acceptance of autonomy would be reflected in perceptions of low levels of influence of external factors. Two respondent groups, namely, teachers and department heads were asked to rate the influences of "individuals, groups, and factors external to the school". The resultant data are reported in Table 6.1. As there were no statistically significant differences between them, the two respondent groups are reported together.

Table 6.1: Perceived Influences of External Factors Upon Departmental Curriculum Decision Making
(Teachers and Department Heads: n = 516)

	A lot	Some	Very Little	None
External syllabus(es)	30%	35%	21%	14%
Departmental curriculum guidelines	27	43	18	12
The moderation/examination system	24	33	21	22
Texts available	21	50	18	11
Underlying subject structure	20	41	25	15
Board of Secondary Studies and committees	13	25	29	33
The availability of grants (e.g. from Schools Commission)	9	20	29	42
Inservice (courses/teacher centres)	8	41	41	10
Advisory teacher	5	27	33	35
Subject related enquiry strategies	5	25	38	32
Subject/professional associations	5	35	44	16
Education books and periodicals	5	32	46	17
Community resources	2	22	43	33
Publishers of curriculum materials/kits	2	30	44	24
Department of Education documents, reviews, memos, etc.	2	28	45	25
The Media	2	17	35	46
The local School Board or Council	2	9	25	64
Innovators from other schools	1	23	43	33
Regional curriculum planning groups	1	18	38	43
State and National politicians	1	4	16	79
Curriculum consultants from Department of Education	1	27	35	37
Subject specialists from tertiary institutions	1	15	34	50
Teachers Unions, Federations	1	7	24	68
Parents	-	12	36	52
Curriculum consultants from universities, CAE's	-	10	32	58
Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra	-	8	20	72

Reviewing the data from an Australia-wide perspective (Table 7.1), the most influential external factors perceived by respondents were "texts available" (71 per cent reported "a lot" or "some" influence), "departmental curriculum guidelines" (71 per cent), "external syllabuses" (66 per cent), "underlying subject structure"(60 per cent), "moderation/examination system" (57 per cent). "Politicians", "teacher unions and federations", curriculum consultants from tertiary institutions, the Curriculum Development Centre (Canberra), parents, and local school boards or councils were all perceived as having "very little" or "no" influence.

It is interesting to note, however, that when the data are considered on the bases of differences between states, some quite pronounced differences emerge, as is shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Percentage of Respondents in each State who Nominated 'a lot' for each of the Perceived External Influences Upon Departmental Curriculum Decision Making

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	ACT	NT	TOTAL
External syllabus(es)	55%	15%	52%	20%	32%	22%	5%	20%	30%
Departmental curriculum guidelines	47	8	43	25	32	21	5	-	27
The moderation/examination system	26	19	54	17	25	21	-	20	24
Texts available	23	16	28	24	16	18	25	60	21
Underlying subject structure	28	14	19	19	22	18	15	10	20
Board of Secondary Studies and committees	28	3	41	2	13	2	-	-	13
The availability of grants (e.g. from Schools Commission)	10	9	17	9	4	8	5	-	9
Inservice (courses/teacher centres)	18	10	6	5	5	1	5	-	8
Advisory teacher	3	4	7	6	5	4	10	10	5
Subject related enquiry strategies	9	5	7	5	3	2	5	-	5
Subject/professional associations	5	15	4	1	3	2	5	-	5
Education books and periodicals	7	11	4	1	5	1	5	-	5
Community resources	2	1	4	2	-	4	-	20	2
Publishers of curriculum materials/kits	4	4	2	2	-	-	5	-	2
Department of Education documents, reviews, memos, etc.	9	-	2	-		-	-	-	2
The Media	2	1	-	1	1	4	5	-	2
The local School Board or Council	1	5	-	-	-	4	-	-	2
Innovators from other schools	2	1	2	-	1	1	-	-	1
Regional curriculum planning groups	-	3	4	2	-	-	-	-	1
State and National politicians	-	3	2	2	1	-	-	-	1
Curriculum consultants from Department of Education	-	-	4	1	3	-	-	-	1
Subject spacialists from tertiary institutions	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Teachers Unions, Federations	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Parents	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Curriculum consultants from universities, CAE's	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

These data from Tables 6.1 and 6.2 indicate that factors external to the school are perceived as exerting "a lot" of influence upon departmental curriculum decision-making, with wide variations between the States. The influence of external syllabuses, departmental curriculum guidelines, and the moderation/examination system are perceived by at least one-quarter of respondents as having "a lot" of influence in the three largest states. (Perhaps coincidentally - or perhaps an index of the difficulty of maintaining communication networks in the larger states?).

The evidence cited from the national survey and also from the case study indicated that external influences upon schools remain substantial, particularly in the three largest states. This casts doubt upon the extent of implementation of SBCD to which many curriculum changes have nevertheless been attributed, perhaps without justification.

Other noteworthy differences are evidenced by the perceptions of influences of subject/professional associations (Victoria), tests available and community resources (N.T.), advisory teachers (A.C.T. and N.T.), Board of Secondary Studies and committees (three largest states), and inservice (N.S.W. and Victoria).

For most of the listed external influences, there were no differences related to size of school, except that

- respondents from small schools perceived community resources to be a greater influence on departmental curriculum decision-making than did respondents from medium-sized and large schools;
- respondents from medium-sized schools perceived "subject specialists from tertiary institutions" to be a greater influence than did respondents from small and large schools;
- respondents from large schools perceived "regional curriculum planning groups" to be a greater influence than respondents from the other two types of schools.

Each of the above three external influences were rated as having relatively little influence.

Respondents from inner city and rural schools perceived parents to have a greater influence on departmental curriculum decisions than respondents from metropolitian schools, though respondents generally rated parents as having relatively little influence.

For most of the listed external influences, there were no differences related to type of school, except that respondents from government schools perceived "advisory teacher", "Department of Education ... memos", and "curriculum consultants from Department of Education" as greater influences on departmental curriculum decisions than did respondents from "independent catholic" and "independent other" type schools.

(b) Case Study Data

Of the 1509 decisions documented at EGHS in 1977, 4.2 per cent were categorised as influenced by external factors. Of these only 0.1 per cent were seen to be staff response to external examinations.

One example of the external examination system and syllabuses issued for the Higher School Certificate influencing the junior secondary curriculum was documented at EGHS. The Science staff planned the Year 10 curriculum to enable students intending to continue to H.S.C. level to undertake the "quantitative" strand as preparation for Year 11. They decided to "make quantitative very difficult" and "pick out of half the class who can do it and half who can't".

(Note: The influence of the moderation system in N.S.W. was documented for EGHS in Chapter V as a mini-case study of the Mathematics and Social Studies departments).
On the whole, external factors were perceived as exerting little influence on whole-school curriculum decision-making at EGHS).

2. FACTORS INTERNAL TO THE SCHOOL

(a) Survey Data

The national survey provided data on respondents' perceptions about internal influences on curriculum decision-making and school climate. These are reported in this section.

(i) Internal influences in decision-making

Teachers and department heads were asked to indicate their ratings of influences of "individuals, groups and factors internal to the school" upon departmental decisions about curriculum. These data are reported in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Perceptions of Teachers and Department Heads Concerning Internal Influences upon Departmental Curriculum Decision Making (n = 516)

	A lot	Some	Very Little	None
Head of Department or Subject Master	64%	28%	6%	2%
Teaching skill and knowledge of department members	39	43	14	4
Attitudes of department members	37	44	13	5
Teacher preparation time available	27	38	28	7
Individual teachers in the school	27	48	19	6
Class time available to do the job	27	44	23	6
School-prepared syllabus or curriculum	26	37	25	12
Timetable	24	38	29	9
School resources (e.g. teacher aides, equipment, library)	23	47	25	5
Availability of texts	21	48	23	8
Groups of teachers in the school	20	44	25	11
School expectations	16	45	32	7
Total Staff meetings to discuss the curriculum	15	33	30	22
School architectural or layout	15	36	31	18
The Principal	12	33	40	15
Information deliberately collected from trialling an idea in the school	11	32	29	28
Opportunities to consult with other teachers from this school	11	40	36	13
The current lesson register	7	28	32	33
Students	7	28	37	28
Other school administrators	5	23	44	28
Librarian	5	28	40	27
Inservice courses within the school	3	21	35	41
Lesson register of previous years	2	24	32	42
The School Counsellor	2	10	32	56

By far the most influential internal factor perceived by respondents upon departmental decisions about curriculum is the "head of department or subject master(s)", with nearly two-thirds of respondents (64 per cent) perceiving their influence as "a lot". Other notable perceived internal influences included "teaching skill or knowledge of department members", "attitudes of department members", "teacher preparation time available", "school-prepared syllabus or curriculum", "class time available to do the job" and "individual teachers in the school".

The School Counsellor, lesson registers (both current and from previous years), in-service courses within the school, the librarian, other school administrators and students were perceived as the least influential of the designated internal influences.

Whilst in general there were not major differences between responses of department heads and of teachers, interestingly higher percentages of department heads perceived "school prepared syllabus or curriculum" (88 per cent of department heads and 55 per cent of teachers) and "total staff meetings to discuss the curriculum" (81 per cent of heads and 36 per cent of teachers) as having "a lot or some" influence upon departmental curriculum decisions than did teachers. This highlights a possible lack of congruence between the intended curriculum as planned for the department and the actual curriculum implemented by teachers in the classroom. In Table 5.7 it was shown that department heads perceived that they participated more in decisions about the department program than did teachers. The two sets of data taken together provide supporting evidence that, where implementers of curriculum decisions are not the decision-makers, intentions and reality are less likely to be congruent.

There were few differences in responses about internal influences on subject department curriculum decisions overall. However, it would appear that in relation to "school-prepared syllabus or curriculum", generally perceived as an important influence, respondents from NSW, SA and NT perceived this as a greater influence than those from QLD, TAS, and ACT, who in turn perceived this as a greater influence than those from WA and VIC. Similarly, the "head of department", as the most important internal influence, was perceived as less influential by respondents from small schools compared to those from large and medium-sized schools. The "school counsellor", the least influential overall, was perceived as a little more influential in large schools. "School expectations", overall perceived as moderately influential, was considered more influential by respondents from independent catholic schools than from other schools.

Principals, department heads and teachers were asked to indicate their perceptions of the problems encountered in schools as they attempted to implement their planned programs. Data about the "major problem" reported by these three respondent groups are presented in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Perceptions of Problems Encountered in Implementing Programs for the School (n = 584)

Problems Encountered	Major Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem
Lack of time for planning	45%	39%	16%
Lack of finance	37	45	18
Architecture of layout of classrooms or teaching areas	32	48	20
Architecture or layout of schools	32	45	23
Lack of equipment	23	47	30
Staff movement to other schools	23	49	28
Lack of support staff	21	54	25
Size of classes	21	48	31
Need to prepare for external/moderating exams	16	39	45
Time allotted for periods	15	40	45
Lack of information about curriculum materials	13	51	36
Ambiguity of objectives	12	42	46
Parental expectations	11	53	36
Lack of clear curriculum guidelines	10	43	47
Poor teachers or teaching	9	53	38
Pressures from society	9	38	53
Promotion ambitions of staff	9	46	45
The School Principal	8	32	60
Prejudice/cultural conflict	7	34	59
Other school administrators	7	32	61
Pressures from parents and community	6	39	55
Student/teacher relationships	4	43	53
The inspectorial system	3	18	79
The Education Department Curriculum Branch	3	21	76
Teacher/teacher relationships	3	39	58
School appraisals	2	34	64

Data about the perceived ratings of problems as "major", "minor" or "not a problem" by all respondents show that in Table 6.4, of the problems perceived as "major", "lack of time for planning" (45 per cent) and "lack of finance" (37 per cent) received the highest percentages of responses, where "school appraisals", "teacher-teacher relationships", "Education Department Curriculum Branch" and "the Inspectorial System" are not perceived major problems.

Table 6.5 contrasts responses to this item for the three respondent groups.

Table 6.5: Percentage for each Respondent Group Showing Perceptions of Major Problems in Implementing Programs for the School

	Principals n=68	Heads of Departments n=144	Teachers n=372
Lack of time for planning	44%	55%	42%
Lack of finance	24	43	38
Architecture or layout of classrooms or teaching areas	25	33	34
Architecture or layout of schools	32	35	31
Lack of equipment	7	23	26
Staff movement to other schools	22	24	23
Lack of support staff	16	22	22
Size of classes	3	19	25
Need to prepare for external/moderating exams	16	16	17
Time allotted for periods	9	19	15
Lack of information about curriculum materials	12	8	15
Ambiguity of objectives	-	12	15
Parental expectations	13	10	12
Lack of clear curriculum guidelines	7	10	10
Poor teachers or teaching	9	9	10
Pressures from society	3	9	10
Promotion ambitions of staff	3	6	11
The School Principal	-	9	9
Prejudice/cultural conflict	9	4	8
Other school administrators	2	7	7
Pressures from parents and community	6	4	6
Student/teacher relationships	-	3	5
The Inspectorial system	2	2	4
The Education Department Curriculum Branch	2	2	3
Teacher/teacher relationships	3	1	3
School appraisals	3	-	2

"Size of class" appears to have more importance as a problem to department heads and teachers than to principals, as do "lack of equipment", "ambiguity of objectives" and "time allotted for periods". Overall it appears that principals perceive fewer major problems influencing the implementation of programs than do the other two groups of respondents, who are the implementers. This points up a need for communication between these groups of people within schools.

In a separate item, respondents were asked to designate the single "most severe problem faced by your school". Table 6.6 reports the data from this item according to the three respondent groups.

Table 6.6: Percentage of each Respondent Group nominating the Most Severe Problem faced by the School

Most Severe Problem	Principals n=68	Heads of Department n=144	Teachers n=373	TOTAL
Lack of time for planning	18%	20%	19%	19%
Lack of finance	21	18	14	16
Staff movements to other schools	12	8	6	7
Size of class	-	4	7	6
Architecture or layout of classrooms or teaching areas	3	8	5	5
Poor teachers or teaching	12	6	4	5
Architecture or layout of school	6	4	4	4
The School Principal	-	2	4	3
Lack of clear curriculum guidelines	2	2	3	3
Lack of support staff	3	2	3	3
Need to prepare for external/moderating exams	3	2	2	2
Pressures from parents and community	2	-	3	2
Pressures from society	3	3	2	2
Lack of equipment	-	2	3	2
Time allotted for periods	-	2	2	2
Ambiguity of objectives	-	1	2	2
Prejudice/cultural conflict	2	2	2	2
Parental expectations	-	1	2	2
Other school administrators	-	2	2	2
Student/teacher relationships	-	2	2	1
Lack of information about curriculum materials	3	1	1	1
Teacher/Teacher relationships	2	-	1	1
Promotion ambitions of staff	-	-	1	1
The Education Department Curriculum Branch	2	-	1	1
School appraisals	-	1	-	1
The Inspectorial system	-	-	-	-
Other	6	7	5	5

In this forced-choice response (i.e. identifyin the one major problem), CAP respondents consistently designated the most severe problem perceived as "lack of time for planning". "Lack of finance" was perceived as the second most severe problem and "staff movements to other schools" another severe problem (68 per cent of Australian teachers have been in their present schools for three years or less). The naming of the same two problems as were mentioned most often by respondents as a major problem confirmed the rankings in Table 6.4.

Further analyses were pursued on the question of "time for planning". Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis that knowledge of fellow staff members, the convening of curriculum meetings by a staff committee, attitude to the principal, perceived authority of principal, the respondent personally, the teachers, and size of school were related to the provision of time for staff planning. The regression equation only accounted for two per cent of the variance and was not significant. On closer examination of the data it appeared that only in six schools did at least three respondents agree that time for planning had been made available. Contrary to the subsequently-gleaned ethnographic data, one of these schools was EGHS. Three were in S.A., one in A.C.T. and one in N.T. However, there was no school where all respondents shared the perception that "time for planning" had been made available.

Teacher and department heads were asked to indicate the influences of various types of information upon their program planning. Their reponses are summarised in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Reported Frequencies of Use by Teachers and Department Heads of Various Student Information Types for Program Planning, by Percentages of Respondents. (n = 516)

Types of Information About Students	Reported Frequencies of Use			
	Always or Almost Always	Often	Not very Often	Hardly ever or Never
Teacher analysis of student classwork	45	44	8	3
Teacher observation of student performance	44	47	6	3
Student conduct and behaviour	23	48	18	11
Student grade level	20	45	23	12
Student performance in previous classes	10	34	37	19
Student preferences	9	42	38	11
Home background of students	7	30	41	22
Characteristics of school's feeder area	3	20	34	43
Intelligence test scores	3	10	25	62
Aptitude test results	2	15	26	57

Thus, respondents reported that the most frequent influences upon their program planning for designated classes were their own within-classroom judgements of student classwork and performance. The grade levels, conduct and student preferences were other types of information most frequently used in program planning.

(ii) School climate

Respondents were asked to respond to 35 items about school climate, rating each on a seven-point Likert scale between "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree". The items were selected drawing upon a similar set of items in a questionnaire used in the U.S.A. in the "Study of Schooling".

Some items related to school climate did not discriminate between respondents (items 1, 15, 16, 18, all being related in perceptions of interpersonal relationships between staff, or the atmosphere of the school). All respondents appeared to agree that their schools were friendly places where people were trusted and new members welcomed. On the whole, principals' responses to items in this question were more positive than were those of teachers and department heads, with teachers the least positive respondent group. The results of responses to this question, for percentage of respondents agreeing and disagreeing, by respondent type and the total sample, are summarised in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8: Respondent perceptions of school climate, reported for proportion (%) of respondent type (n = 586)

	T		H		P			TOTAL	
	% agree	% disagree	% agree	% disagree	% agree	% disagree		% agree	% disagree
1. A friendly atmosphere prevails among the staff	96	4	95	5	100	-		96	4
2. The principal usually makes most of the important decisions that affect this school	84	16	76	24	78	22		82	18
3. Staff members support and encourage the principal	80	20	80	20	100	-		82	18
4. People are involved in making decisions which affect them	80	20	83	17	100	-		83	17
5. The principal knows the problems faced by the staff	79	21	76	24	98	2		81	19
6. The principal encourages "team work"	82	18	78	22	94	6		82	18
7. The principal is reluctant to allow staff members any freedom of action	27	73	13	87	4	96		21	79
8. Staff members frequently discuss how they feel about each other	50	50	45	55	46	54		48	52
9. There are cliques of teachers who make it difficult to have an open climate	43	57	34	66	25	75		39	61
10. Staff members don't listen to each other	26	74	29	71	21	79		26	74
11. Staff members support and encourage each other	85	15	85	15	97	3		86	14
12. The principal is supportive and encouraging to the staff	82	18	83	17	100	-		85	15
13. The principal cares for the personal welfare of staff members	87	13	81	19	100	-		87	13
14. The staff members trust the principal	73	27	76	24	96	4		76	24
15. In my work group (e.g. department, year level) we trust each other a great deal	93	7	96	4	90	10		93	7
16. New staff members are made to feel welcome and part of the group	91	9	92	8	98	2		92	8
17. Meetings are usually dominated by a few individuals	78	22	70	30	65	35		74	26
18. Staff members can do their work in the way they think is best	93	7	92	8	91	9		92	8
19. The principal uses group meetings to solve important school problems	73	27	71	29	94	6		75	25
20. It is often unclear as to who can make decisions	49	51	42	58	31	69		45	55
21. Staff members are proud to be working in this school	81	19	79	21	93	7		82	18
22. The principal trusts the staff members	83	17	81	19	97	3		84	16
23. There are opportunities for advancement for staff members who work hard at this school	65	35	72	28	88	12		69	31
24. Staff members don't really trust each other enough	29	71	24	76	18	82		26	74
25. After decisions are made, nothing is usually done about them	38	62	42	58	12	88		36	64
26. The morale of staff members is rather low	24	76	23	77	7	93		21	79
27. Conflicts between staff members are handled constructively	73	27	76	24	98	2		77	23
28. I usually look forward to each working day at this school	82	18	88	12	96	4		85	15
29. Decisions are made by people who have the most adequate and accurate information	68	32	74	26	94	6		73	27
30. Excessive rules and red tape make it difficult to get things done	40	60	28	72	4	96		33	67
31. There is an "every person for themselves" attitude	32	68	24	76	2	98		27	73
32. The principal helps staff members settle their differences	57	43	85	15	98	2		64	36
33. The principal accepts staff decisions even if not agreeing with them	54	46	65	35	69	31		58	42
34. Staff members have a high degree of commitment to their jobs	84	16	82	18	94	6		86	14
35. Communication is good between staff and principal	67	33	71	29	97	3		79	21

A factor analysis was carried out using the SPSS package on the items contained in the School Climate section in order to explore possible clusters within the items. The factor analyses produced six factors for teacher responses to the "climate" item, seven factors for department head responses, and 11 factors for principals' responses. For teachers and department heads, the first factor extracted approximately 65 per cent of the variance. All items that loaded on this factor related to staff-principal interaction (Items 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 19, 22, 29, 33, 35). By contrast, for principals, the first factor, accounting for 32 per cent of the variance, exhibited no conceptually clear construct. The relationships of each item to the relevant factors are presented in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9: Patterns of factors related to school climate items, as perceived by three respondent groups

	FACTOR NUMBER		
	Teachers	Heads of Departments	Principals
1. A friendly atmosphere prevails among the staff	2	2	1
2. The principal usually makes most of the important decisions that affect this school	3	4	5
3. Staff members support and encourage the principal	1	1	1
4. People are involved in making decisions which affect them	1	1	1
5. The principal knows the problems faced by the staff	1	1	5
6. The principal encourages "team work"	1	1	3
7. The principal is reluctant to allow staff members any freedom of action	1	4	3
8. Staff members frequently discuss how they feel about each other	6	7	1
9. There are cliques of teachers who make it difficult to have an open climate	2	2	2
10. Staff members don't listen to each other	2	2	2
11. Staff members support and encourage each other	2	2	1/2
12. The principal is supportive and encouraging to the staff	1	1	8
13. The principal cares for the personal welfare of staff members	1	1	8
14. The staff members trust the principal	1	1	1
15. In my work group (e.g. department, year level) we trust each other a great deal	2	5	5
16. New staff members are made to feel welcome and part of the group	2	5	1
17. Meetings are usually dominated by a few individuals	2	-	2
18. Staff members can do their work in the way they think is best	1	2	1
19. The principal uses group meetings to solve important school problems	1	1	9
20. It is often unclear as to who can make decisions	4	3	3
21. Staff members are proud to be working in this school	5	2	10
22. The principal trusts the staff members	1	1	4
23. There are opportunities for advancement for staff members who work hard at this school	1	6	9
24. Staff members don't really trust each other enough	2	2	2
25. After decisions are made, nothing is usually done about them	5	3	7
26. The morale of staff members is rather low	5	1	7
27. Conflicts between staff members are handled constructively	2	2	3
28. I usually look forward to each working day at this school	1	2	6
29. Decisions are made by people who have the most adequate and accurate information	1	1	11
30. Excessive rules and red tape make it difficult to get things done	1	4	10
31. There is an "every person for themselves" attitude	2	2	10
32. The principal helps staff members settle their differences	1	1	3
33. The principal accepts staff decisions even if not agreeing with them	1	1	6
34. Staff members have a high degree of commitment to their jobs	2	2	4
35. Communication is good between staff and principal	1	1	6

The climate items did not discriminate between principals' responses to any extent, in contrast to responses of department heads and teachers on some items. Items loading onto the first factor (staff-principal relationship) for teachers and department heads only were added to form a scale. This scale was then used with other predictors in an attempt to find empirical support for some hypotheses about innovation present in the sample schools (for example, time for planning). No regression equation attempted accounted for more than six per cent of the variance.

These analyses were being conducted as data were being collected from EGHS where respondents' reports showed a lack of consensus. On further close examination of the survey data, it was clear that it was not possible to create a scale for perceived school climate for use in any regression analyses because individual respondents' perceptions within a school differed widely.

When profiles for a number of schools were developed using data from a large number of items related to principal's leadership style, these confirmed the idiosyncratic nature of each school identified in earlier analyses. For example, one principal stated that s/he was very satisfied with the planning and teaching in the school in relation to all curriculum elements. However, s/he reported the most severe problem to be "time for planning". The major problem was lack of guidelines for curriculum. The principal reported no total staff meeting to plan curriculum, no trialling of ideas, school-prepared curriculum as having no influence, little team work, little freedom of action for staff, and low participation by the principal in decision-making about the various curriculum elements. This school had no special student population problems, being a co-educational junior secondary government school in a metropolitan middle-class area.

The principal of a large school in a rural town with a large ethnic community reported less satisfaction with some aspects of planning. Time for planning was also the most severe problem. Other major problems were perceived to be architecture, poor teaching and staff mobility. The principal reported that Department of Education curriculum guidelines, and department heads had a lot of influence on curriculum. This principal indicated stronger disillusionment with teaching than the previous principal.

Both these principals reported that they would not accept decisions with which they did not agree.

A third principal who reported the same style of operation, indicated that there was no severe problem, no major problems, but there were minor problems of poor teaching and staff mobility. This principal was very satisfied with planning all aspects of the curriculum. The school, a moderate-sized junior secondary co-educational school in an upper class area, had initiated more time for planning. Staff participation in decision-making was high. The principal had attended inservice courses in group dynamics. When teacher responses from this school were considered, there was disagreement on most items examined. For example, four teachers gave four different responses regarding the most severe problem (lack of curriculum guidelines, equipment, finance and time for planning).

When the top 20% per cent and bottom 20% per cent of schools ranked for reported socio-economic status (SES) of parents were compared on the principal's satisfaction with planning of curriculum, no major differences were discerned. In relation to the most severe problem, however, more problems were cited by principals of low SES schools than of high SES schools. In low SES schools "poor teachers and teaching", "staff mobility" and architecture of the school and classrooms appeared to be causing more concern than in high SES schools. However, differences between the two groups of schools on a number of variables were not apparent.

Because of the disparate nature of responses within schools, no further multi-variate analyses were conducted on the total survey sample. We then abandoned the process of "number crunching" the survey data.

(b) Case Study Data

Analyses of the field diary records from observation at EGHS in 1977 and 1978 identified some apparently significant influences on curriculum decision-making. These included compartmentalisation, timetable, school prepared syllabus/curriculum, response to a crisis event, the principal, department heads, individual teachers, their knowledge and skill, decision-making skills, attitudes of staff members, and perceptions of student motivations. These are now illustrated in turn below.

(i) Compartmentalisation

In the CAP national survey, "architecture or layout of classrooms or teaching areas", "architecture or layout of the school" and "lack of equipment" were perceived as major problems in implementing programs. At EGHS, the CAP team observed that staff rooms were widely separated architecturally and were generally allocated according to separate subject departments. Teaching areas were also divided up with clusters of rooms allocated according to subject area. Five department heads at EGHS stated this was a major problem. Teachers reported on lack of items of equipment, expressing a reluctance to borrow such equipment from other departments and indicating a belief that other department staffs were unwilling to share resources.

The system developed in the school in 1977 for use of classrooms, equipment and for taking classes on excursions was to have teachers "book" these resources by writing the details in a diary in the deputy principal's office. The first person to "book" a resource was granted the use of it, later bookings being rejected without any consultation with other persons affected by the decision. There were some examples of new approaches to teaching and curriculum innovation ceasing after a few days because another staff member objected to the change.

Thus, the compartmentalising of both the curriculum and the school into subject departments resulted in an atmosphere of competitiveness for resources like time, space, and funds available from parent groups.

A further example of compartmentalisation of the curriculum influencing decision-making was the traditional separation of History and Geography, joining one to English and the other to Commerce.

> She said a number of teachers were concerned that Social Studies had become very much Sociology and were conscious that they hadn't in their University studies in the discipline done any work in Sociology, and so were feeling not confident to teach the new Social Studies for that reason ... and were saying "Why don't we just leave it alone and keep teaching History and Geography?" (Diary records)

At total staff meetings it was observed that many staff members sat in departmental groups, while a few mixed across subject areas.

Some informal decision-making was reported across subject departments. The Social Science and History masters had met informally to discuss integration. One teacher suggested that decisions were made at lunch-time or in informal meetings in staff rooms, rather than at formal meetings. On one occasion, a teacher was observed in three different locations within a 30 minute time span conferring with other staff about attendance of all classes at a video playback of the school play.

(ii) Timetable

Early in 1977, the EGHS staff accepted an offer made by a computer firm to work out the school's timetable. By July, when CAP observations began, the school was still functioning on a "temporary" timetable, as the promised computed results had not eventuated. The firm reported that "the computer could only handle 54 slots". A small staff group was then appointed in June to revise the temporary timetable for use in the second half of the year.

In third term 1977, a timetable committee was appointed to prepare the 1978 timetable. This group was released from classes for two weeks to complete the task. Some staff members expressed their concern about the timetable difficulties, with no blocks of time provided for each subject department to meet as a total staff for planning, or no timetabling of buying provisions for Home Science classes. By October 1977, the timetable had been adjusted to allow Home Science staff preparation time for the first two periods on Mondays.

On 31.1.78 the field diary recorded that:

> The master timetable was displayed in the senior students' study room, and teachers were intermittently visiting the room in order to ascertain their subject allocations for the year

illustrating that the timetable was the source of information for the staff.

On 29.3.78 the field diary recorded that three senior staff members had been engaged almost full time on timetabling, and were then checking timetabling problems. By 5.4.78 the timetable was operative.

Staff appeared to perceive that timetabling/staffing were controlled by authorities outside the school.

> Curriculum is controlled by the computer at Head Office which allocates staff without any concern for the needs of the school and its timetable (Field Diary 5.2.78)

One of the timetable committee members stated

> It's only in the last five years that all these problems have happened. The Wyndham Scheme with compulsory head office timetables made the organisation of the school much easier. You could staff the school with teachers given. The Base Paper changed all this. But the staffing formula hasn't kept pace. We even have full classes (34, 35) for personal development. These are sensitive classes, but we can't afford to cut the class size. (Field Diary)

For more details on the effect of timetabling on "staff finding time for planning ", see Chapter VIII. A discussion of some CAP initiatives regarding the mechanics of timetabling is also found in the same chapter.

(iii) School Prepared Syllabus or Curriculum

EGHS respondents to the survey reported that "school prepared syllabus or curriculum" was more influential than was reported in the national survey. In 1977, field diary records reported one department head's statement that two years previously there had been no curriculum for that subject area. On appointment to the school s/he had located in the storeroom a list of content for each year and had used this as a starting point. In NSW the Year 10 moderating exam was removed at the beginning of 1977, and coincidentally the EGHS staff had begun preparing subject curriculum plans for Years 7-8. However, there did not appear to be a statement of the school curriculum to guide this activity. Perhaps in this case the lack of a school-based curriculum and the need to develop one raised the importance of this perceived influence.

(iv) Response to Crisis Event

In June 1977, the field diary recorded extensive disruption to the school curriculum because of having to timetable for health checks on all students and teachers in response to identification of head lice in the student body. This unprogrammable, unanticipated event affected the school for several weeks. No advance planning could have avoided the effect of this influence, as with other crises arising in any school.

(v) The Principal

It was observed that the principal was interested in students and their problems, enthusiastic about creative projects in the school and most encouraging to teachers who initiated such activities. S/he knew the staff well and in between pressures of routine administration, and the often heavy burden of dealing with the Education Department and its regional office, tried to maintain an open door policy which facilitated easy informal communication. However, s/he was under fairly constant stress in "handling" the array of activities with which s/he was confronted, and so often was placed in a conflict situation which tended to erode communication channels with the staff as a whole. S/he believed it was unwise to attempt to interact in the personal affairs and concerns of her staff, feeling that would be an invasion on their privacy. The principal's basic policy was to "fan the spark" for any staff member showing initiative in innovating within the school.

S/he held back on her/his own ideas until someone else initiated them and then supported them (for example, "Loma so what's new? I've been wanting to do that for years. Go ahead". Field Diary Notes 20.11.79)

(vi) Department Heads

In the case study school, field diary notes illustrate some of the ways department heads were seen to influence curriculum decision-making. On 15.2.78 one subject master commented

> ... his main job is to protect his existing staff

He suggested that a staffing situation

> ... should have been resolved at the Heads of Departments (Executive) meeting ... rather than at a general staff meeting ... "That's what masters are paid for - the few making decisions. Most of the work of teachers and masters is otherwise similar."

On 7.6.78, another master

> ... confirmed that, organisationally speaking, the allocations of teacher times are largely negotiated within these Head of Department meetings ... Masters at these meetings are "battling for extra time for their areas."

This was explained in relation to the freedom of students to choose between options in a department and that departments need to attract enough students to maintain department size so these options can still be offered.

It was reported in diary notes of 25.10.78 that the Head of Department meeting "was flexible enough" to rearrange the lunch time and length of some lessons so that a greater amount of time could be allocated to Sport, while still fitting into the planned bus roster for transporting students to and from sporting locations. This rearrangement had occurred because of complaints from teachers, students and other schools that there was insufficient time for "full games".

EGHS staff provided supporting evidence for the survey data, illustrating the perceptions of the heavy influence of Heads of Department. These persons were perceived to have the power to make decisions to cooperate in modifying the organisational structure of the school, sometimes in response to curriculum needs, while at the same time competing with each other to maintain the power of their respective subject departments.

On 13.11.78, a conversation with two teachers was reported. They indicated that

> ... the power of the Executive was quite significant. "Everyone gets representation at the Executive meeting, including the Library and small groups; people feel they know what's going on." The implication I was given was that although the Executive seemed to make decisions, teachers did not feel that they were being railroaded. On the contrary, they felt that in a sense the Executive meetings were making decisions that they weren't particularly interested in making themselves anyway and that "... if something comes up that bothers teachers they get together, otherwise they leave things to the Masters".

Obervational data from four Meetings of Department Heads, on the other hand, indicated that, of 52 decisions referred to, 17.3 per cent were actually made during the meeting, 46.2 per cent had been made prior to the meeting by unknown decision-makers, and 36.5 per cent were directives from external Education authorities reported at the meeting. This provides contradictory evidence about the accuracy of teachers' perceptions that decisions were actually being made at the Executive meeting.

(vii) Individual Teachers in the School

Data from EGHS recorded the important influence of individual innovators in the school, as described in reports of the six mini-case studies. The principal's self-reported role was to "fan a spark where you see it". Activities such as Personal Development, Teacher Effectiveness Training, Career Education, Excursions, Religious Education, Drama, Creative Dance were initiated by individual teachers with the encouragement of the principal. Thus, innovative teachers were reinforced for individualistic initiative, but this possibly mitigated at times against group involvement in innovative activities. A further factor encouraging initiatives and innovations by individual teachers was the promotional system. Teachers preparing for inspections for promotional purposes need to provide evidence of initiatives to demonstrate that they are eligible for/suitable for promotion.

(viii) Teaching Skill and Knowledge of Department Members

Field diary notes recorded some supporting evidence for the national survey findings that "teaching skill and knowledge of department members" was an influence on curriculum decision-making.

During 1977, only one example was found of lack of a teacher's skill influencing what was offered in a subject. The Music Department were not able to offer tuition to school band members for one brass instrument because no staff member could play that instrument. In 1978, the Science Department utilised the skills of parents and community members to provide expertise lacked by the Science staff (see Chapter V111 re Consultancy).

However, there were countless examples of the skills of teachers being used as the basis for identifying activities that could be offered to students. For example, a highly-skilled dramatist on the staff made possible a drama elective as part of Year 11 English curriculum. The establishment and continuation of the school newspaper as a vehicle for teaching journalism and photography skills were made possible by two teachers possessing these skills. Post-examination period Term 4 special activities offered over 100 different course options available from staff members. Their implementation depended only upon sufficient levels of student interest.

(ix) Skill in Decision-making

At EGHS, it appeared that staff members had not developed skills in group processes for decision-making. They rarely (if ever) reached a verbalised consensus decision, especially in total group staff meetings. The size of the staff may have been a contributing factor, though no informant on the staff commented on this.

(x) Attitudes of Staff Members

At EGHS there were many examples of staff members' attitudes influencing, and indeed hindering, curriculum decision-making. For example, one staff member on numerous occasions remarked "We tried that and it didn't work" and gave other typically negative responses to suggested innovations. Some people appeared to have little status. They were rarely listened to or responded to in group discussions. There was a resistance from some members to "extra-curricula" activities that took time from "teaching", reflecting a narrow view of the curriculum and its contents. Many teachers turned up late for staff meetings and engaged in subgroup discussions and joking while the meetings were in progress. They generally appeared uncommitted and/or powerless. For example, one teacher said that he couldn't do anything because "they" wouldn't let him. He said that "they" were very distant, and he had no control over "them".

On 19.9.77 prior to a total staff meeting, some staff members commented when seeing the formal arrangement of the common room,

"We're going to be harangued."

"I've got my staff meeing stuff - one class's work to mark."

Some young staff members remained almost "outsiders" in meetings of total and departmental meetings, often being ignored when they spoke. Some women staff members, though by no means all, expressed a consciousness that "it was difficult to stand up to other people, particularly males" when resources were needed.

"Let's sit near the doorway so we can make a fast get away."

The observer noted that one curriculum decision was reported and no decisions were made at one particular meeting.

(xi) Perceptions of Student Motivations

A similar item was asked of EGHS teachers and of random samples of parents and students of EGHS. Their responses are summarised in Table 6.10, with average ratings and rankings for each respondent group for each of the aspects listed.

Teachers in the national sample were asked to indicate how they thought students would rate 10 different aspects they would value most about coming to school.

Table 6.10: Perceptions about most valued aspects about coming to school (1-Highest, 10-Lowest)

Average Ranking for each of ten aspects listed

	National Survey Teachers		EGHS Teachers		EGHS Parents		EGHS Students	
	Mean Rating	Rank	Mean Rating	Rank	Mean Rating	Rank	Mean Rating	Rank
Passing exams	5.4	4	3.6	2	3.3	1	2.7	1
Mixing with other students	3.1	1	2.4	1	3.6	3	4.0	3
Preparing for a job	3.2	2	4.3	4	3.8	4	2.9	2
Learning what is presented in the course	5.9	7	5.9	7	3.4	2	4.4	4
Having fun	5.5	5	5.3	5	7.0	8	7.3	8
Playing games and/or sport	6.0	8	5.7	6	6.2	7	7.2	7
Following rules set down by the school	9.0	10	9.0	10	7.7	9	8.0	10
Earning teacher favour	8.3	9	8.3	9	8.9	10	7.7	9
Satisfying parent expectations	4.0	3	3.9	3	5.9	6	5.1	6
Getting high marks	5.6	6	6.4	8	5.1	5	4.6	5
	n=372		n=23		n=39		n=94	

Student respondents of different year levels at EGHS rated differently what they valued most about coming to school, illustrating a change in motivations as they moved up through their school years. Samples were proportioned to the number of students in each year. These data are reported in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11: Percentage of EGHS students rating a "1" for what they value most about coming to school. (n = 94)

	YEAR			
	7 (n=16)	8 (n=18)	9 (n=30)	10 (n=30)
	%	%	%	%
Passing exams	44	33	31	27
Mixing with other students	19	19	7	7
Preparing for a job	31	31	43	37
Learning what is presented in the courses	6	-	3	20
Having fun	-	-	3	3
Playing games or sport	-	-	3	3
Following rules set down by the school	-	-	-	-
Earning teacher approval	-	-	-	-
Satisfying parent expectations	-	11	3	3
Getting high marks	-	6	7	-

"Passing examinations" decreased and "preparing for a job" increased in rated importance as year level increased. "Getting high marks" appeared to be relatively unimportant to students at any year level.

(c) Decision Analyses

The 1509 recorded decisions identified in 1977 observational records were analysed in relation to the influences on these decisions. There were 39 different influences identified. These results are reported in Table 6.12.

Table 6.12: Influences on recorded decisions, identified from 1977 observational records (n = 1509)

Influence	Frequency		
	n	%	
External agency	15	1.0	
Crisis event (e.g. head lice)	29	1.9	
Dept of Education policy	17	1.1	
Media	2	0.1	
Staff response to external exams	1	0.1	
External	64		4.2
Finance/money	15	1.0	
Time for planning	37	2.5	
Equipment facilities space	25	1.7	
Time(ta[illegible])	77	5.1	
Human resources/ancillary	23	1.5	
Curriculum guidelines	4	0.3	
Property maintenance	19	1.3	
Resource availability	200		13.3
School counsellor	1	0.1	
Staffing	16	1.1	
Promotion system	5	0.3	
Structure of the system	86	5.7	
Curriculum skill	66	4.4	
Principal's role expectations	14	0.9	
Individual innovator	36	2.4	
Age-experience of staff	5	0.3	
Staff expectations of student behaviour - classroom	53	3.5	
- non-classroom	23	1.5	
Structure of the system	305		20.2

Table 6.12 (continued)

	n	%	
Sense of responsibility to educational/ non-educational community	5	0.3	
Personal values	84	5.6	
Communication system	35	2.3	
Values difference	34	2.3	
Staff needs and teamwork	147	9.3	
Sense of group membership	18	1.2	
Lack of communication between staff	20	1.3	
School philosophy/shared values	3	0.2	
Decision-making processes	3	0.2	
Attitude to change/status quo (we did it this way before)	3	0.2	
Human relationships	352		23.4
Student progress factors	35	2.3	
Curriculum implementation	94	6.2	
Selection of learning experiences	57	3.8	
Curriculum implementation	186		12.3
Student norms/perceptions of	12	0.8	
Parents	24	1.6	
CAP/research project	95	6.3	
Feedback from researchers	3	0.2	
CAP	98		6.5
Unknown	268	17.7	
Total	1509	100.0	

The most frequent influences were the "structure of the system" (5.7 per cent of decisions), "personal values" (5.6 per cent) and "time or timetable" (5.1 per cent), apart from CAP (6.3 per cent).

When these influences were grouped according to "subsystems" of the school's social system, the most frequently identified category of influences were aspects of the human relationships subsystem (23.4 per cent). Structural aspects (20.2. per cent), resource availability (13.3 per cent) and curriculum implementation (12.3 per cent) were all more frequently recorded as influences than were external factors (4.2 per cent) or the actions of the CAP team (6.5 per cent).

Cross-tabulations were calculated for the relationship of influences to other factors. Data was grouped according to over-arching or macro-categories. Table 6.13 summarises the data analyses in relation to the relative influence of each influence category on each type of decision recorded.

Table 6.13: Proportion of recorded decisions influenced by types of influences, for types of decision (n = 1509)

INFLUENCE	Proportion of recorded decisions DECISION-TYPE					
	Curriculum	Resource Utilisation	Structure	Human Relationship	CAP	Total
External	31.1	26.6	20.3	20.3	1.6	100.0
Resource availability	12.0	49.5	16.0	19.0	3.5	100.0
Structure	15.1	28.5	25.6	30.2	0.7	100.0
Curriculum Implementation	44.1	23.7	5.9	25.8	0.5	100.0
Human relationships	12.5	18.8	16.2	50.0	2.6	100.0
CAP	3.1	10.2	1.0	10.2	75.5	100.0
Parents	16.7	33.3	0.0	50.0	0.0	100.0
Students	0.0	8.3	75.0	16.7	0.0	100.0
Unknown	27.8	26.7	20.7	22.2	2.6	100.0
Total	19.7	26.7	17.0	29.9	6.7	100.0

Of the 64 decisions categorised as being influenced by external factors, 31 per cent were recorded as being about curriculum. Resource availability influenced resource utilisation (50 per cent) most, whereas structural factors influenced human relationships decisions most (30 per cent). Of the 186 decisions recorded as influenced by curriculum implementation, 44 per cent were about curriculum aspects. Parents appeared to exert most influence on human relationships decisions (50 per cent) and students on structural decisions (75 per cent), though students were recorded as only influencing 12 decisions in total, and parents 24 decisions.

Table 6.14 summarises the cross-tabulations regarded influences and decision-making style for the 1509 recorded decisions.

Table 6.14: Percentages of recorded decisions influenced by types of influences, for type of decision-making style (n = 1509)

INFLUENCE	Proportion of recorded decisions DECISION-MAKING STYLE				
	Unilateral	Small group	Consensus	Unknown	Total
Overall Percentages	34.4%	7.7	8.0	49.8	100.0%
External	32.8%	4.7	6.3	56.3	100.0
Resource availability	27.5	4.0	8.5	60.0	100.0
Structure	41.0	5.2	9.8	43.9	100.0
Curriculum Implementation	28.5	2.7	11.3	57.5	100.0
Human relationships	47.6	11.7	8.5	32.2	100.0
CAP	50.5	32.0	1.0	16.5	100.0
Parents	33.3	4.2	8.3	54.2	100.0
Students	16.7	33.0	0.0	50.0	100.0
Unknown	14.6	2.6	6.0	76.9	100.0
Total	34.4%	7.7	8.0	49.8	100.0%

These results illustrate the predominance of a unilateral decision-making style in relation to all influences, other than those influenced by CAP and students, where a small-group style was more frequently recorded than other styles.

Table 6.15 summarises the results of cross-tabulations for influences in relation to the various types of decision-makers.

Table 6.15: Percentages of recorded decisions influenced by types of influence, for type of decision-maker (n = 1509)

INFLUENCE	Proportion of recorded decisions DECISION-MAKER										
	Principal	Executive alone	Executive and others	Staff group	Individual	External	Student	Parent	CAP	Unknown	Total
Overall Percentages	10.7	15.9	3.2	10.5	10.7	2.8	4.0	1.7	3.7	36.7	100.0%
External	17.2	9.4	6.3	6.3	0.0	21.9	0.0	1.6	1.6	35.9	100.0
Resource availability	7.5	18.0	4.0	12.0	7.0	3.0	1.0	2.5	1.5	43.5	100.0
Structure	15.4	21.0	3.0	10.5	11.1	2.0	4.6	2.0	0.3	30.2	100.0
Curriculum Implementation	5.9	12.9	3.8	15.6	12.4	0.5	5.4	1.1	0.0	42.5	100.0
Human relationships	13.6	19.6	4.5	14.5	16.8	1.1	4.3	1.7	1.7	22.2	100.0
CAP	8.2	17.0	0.0	0.0	15.3	1.0	0.0	3.1	44.9	10.2	100.0
Parents	25.0	8.3	0.0	8.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	37.5	100.0
Students	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	91.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Unknown	6.0	8.2	1.5	6.3	4.5	3.7	3.4	0.4	0.4	65.7	100.0

It is interesting to note the extent to which external influences (17 per cent) and parents (25 per cent) were categorised as being exerted on the principal, in comparison to other decision-makers. Other results are consistent with the finding that executive members acting alone made more decisions than other staff members or groups.

Table 6.16 summarises the data analyses regarding the various influences on the types of decisions categorised.

Table 6.16: Percentages of types of recorded decisions, for type of influence (n = 1509)

DECISION TYPE	Proportion of recorded decisions INFLUENCE									
	External	Resource Availability	Structure	Curriculum Implementation	Human Relationships	CAP	Parents	Students	Unknown	Total
Overall Percentages	4.2%	13.3	20.2	12.3	23.4	6.5	1.6	0.8	17.7	100.0%
Curriculum	6.7%	8.1	15.5	27.6	14.8	1.0	1.3	0.0	24.9	100.0
Resource utilisation	4.2	24.6	21.6	10.9	16.4	2.5	2.0	0.2	17.6	100.0
Structure	5.1	12.5	30.5	4.3	22.3	0.4	0.0	3.5	21.5	100.0
Human relationships	2.9	8.4	20.4	10.7	39.1	2.2	2.7	0.4	13.1	100.0
CAP	1.0	6.9	2.0	1.0	8.9	73.3	0.0	0.0	6.9	100.0

Curriculum decisions were influenced more by curriculum implementation (28 per cent), resource utilisation decisions more by structure (22 per cent), structure decisions more by structural factors (31 per cent) and human relationships decisions more by human relationships (39 per cent) than by other factors.

Table 6.17 summarises the relationships between influences and decision-making style.

Table 6.17: Percentages of recorded decisions of type of decision-making style influenced by type of influence (n = 1609)

DECISION STYLE	External	Resource Availability	Structure	Curriculum Implementation	Human Relationships	CAP	Parents	Students	Unknown	Total
	Proportion of recorded decisions INFLUENCE									
Overall Percentages	4.2	13.3	20.2	12.3	23.4	6.5	1.6	0.8	17.5	100.0
Unilateral	4.0	10.6	24.1	10.2	32.2	9.4	1.5	0.4	7.5	100.0
Small group	2.6	6.9	13.8	4.3	45.3	26.7	0.9	3.4	6.0	100.0
Consensus	3.3	14.0	24.8	17.4	24.8	0.8	1.7	0.0	13.2	100.0
Unknown	4.8	16.0	17.8	14.2	15.0	2.1	1.7	0.8	27.4	100.0

(d) Summary

By contrast to the data emerging from the national survey, the case study data suggest that decision-making at EGHS was perceived by more people as being more frequently influenced by internal factors within the school and its social system, than by external factors. Where such external influences were identified, they were considered to be more frequently exerted on the principal.

CHAPTER VII

RESULTS: OPEN ENDED SURVEY ITEMS

There is an increasing tendency for surveys to incorporate only those questionnaire items which are amenable to a structured response system, especially where machine scoring facilities are available. This may impose the researchers' perceptions of the situation being investigated on the responses, and so deny the respondents their opportunity to respond from their own frame of reference.

At the outset, it was decided by the Curriculum Action Project team to explore respondent frames of reference by deliberately including open-ended items. This was despite the known labour-intensive nature of their analyses, especially as it could not be foreshadowed that adequate resources would be available for this purpose. Fortuitously, three students of the School of Education at Macquarie University were engaged in postgraduate studies in the area of curriculum decision-making, and elected to analyse the key items as their postgraduate projects.

The results of these analyses are reported in the following three sections:

(1) perceptions of curriculum;
(2) perceptions of curriculum autonomy;
(3) perceptions of the ideal curriculum.

(1) PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM

Sue Josephsen

INTRODUCTION

In a recent article, Fischer & Klein (1978) challenge a number of what they regard as "simplistic beliefs about curriculum". One of these is that "everyone knows what is meant by curriculum".

In our schools, the word "curriculum" is used extensively - curriculum documents from State departments of education, curriculum consultants, the curriculum of the school, the science or art curriculum, curriculum decisions, etc. Perhaps because we are hearing and using the word so frequently, there is an implicit assumption that we all know what it means!

Among the curriculum theorists, however, we find that there is no universal agreement about what 'curriculum' means - there are many definitions of the term. Pick up any 10 books on curriculum and it is probable that there will be 10 different definitions!

Even though there is uncertainty about just what the term 'curriculum' refers to, there now seems to be a trend to define it more broadly than was done in the past. As Skilbeck (1978:3) states:

> It is now common practice amongst educationists to define the word curriculum so as to embrace every facet of experience undergone by learners in schools or under the guidance of schools. According to this conception, traditional distinctions between the content of education and processes of teaching and learning are blurred; similarly the drawing of lines between "curricular" and "extra-curricular" activities becomes an empty or archaic exercise. The old equation of curriculum with syllabus, and hence the natural tendency to identify what is "serious" and "important" in schools with what is listed in the syllabus and timetable, is rejected by the advocates of this new conception of curriculum. Interestingly, in this regard, progressivists and traditionalists come together in believing that it is the total life of the school community that is important, not the content of any one subject area.

A more crucial aspect, however, is that, regardless of what definition we have, our concept of what curriculum actually is directly affects our ideas of curriculum decision-making and curriculum practices in general. In the current climate of concern regarding school based curriculum decision-making, it is imperative that all educators know how their assumptions about curriculum affect curriculum practice.

In an attempt to discover how secondary teachers perceived "curriculum", the CAP national survey asked respondents:

"Write your own definition of what you understand by the word 'curriculum'."

It was hoped that responses to this open-ended question would provide data to clarify some of the questions emerging from the literature.

e.g. 1. Do teachers have similar perceptions of the term "curriculum"?

2. Do most teachers have a broad definition of curriculum?

3. Do teachers perceive curriculum in terms of what is planned for students or in terms of what students actually experience?

Furthermore, initial analyses of some sections of the structured questionnaire led to the following possible questions:

4. Do teachers' definitions of curriculum vary among states?

5. Do definitions of curriculum differ according to the type of respondent - principals, department heads, and teachers?

METHODOLOGY

The full set of responses to this survey question was used in the analysis. Initially, responses from two states were read through to get a preliminary idea of the nature and variety of responses given. From this preliminary reading a number of possible categories emerged. However, on further reading of responses from another four states, it was found that the categories were not as useful or appropriate as first thought. In addition, it was considered that to attempt to classify the responses into several discrete categories would have, in many cases, obscured the overall meaning or intent of the responses.

Consequently, it was decided to classify them into only two broad categories - those which defined "curriculum" in broad terms, and those which defined it narrowly. To cater for ambiguous or unusable responses, a third category "other" was included.

The complete sets of responses from all eight states and territories were then classified into one of the above three categories, considered as mutually exclusive.

Definitions of these categories are as follows. Because of the broad nature of these a number of examples have been given to clarify the operational definitions.

1. Narrow definition of Curriculum

This category includes those responses defining curriculum mainly in terms of courses of study, subjects undertaken, course content etc.

The topics that we teach in school	Teacher, NSW
An outline of a particular course of study	Department Head, SA
The program of work set out by a teacher for students to follow	Teacher, Tas.
Total subject content of things to be taught	Teacher, Tas.
The courses of study within the school and organized by the school	Principal, NSW
A bird's eye view of the essential elements of a subject e.g. English - that a school will offer from Grades 8-12	Department Head, NT

2. Broad definition of curriculum

Responses classified in this category include those defining curriculum more widely than in terms of subjects, content and courses, and includes a greater diversity of responses than does Category 1. Typical responses included those mentioning, overall program of the school, sum of all activities, totality of experience, etc.

The overall program of a school and the philosophy and way in which the program is carried out	Teacher, SA
Curriculum is the total planned school experience which may occur in or out of school	Principal, Vic.
The combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are passed on by the education process	Teacher, QLD
Complete educational program	Teacher, WA
Curriculum is the overall plan of a learning situation ... it must contain a statement of objectives for the curriculum, the methods to be used to fulfil these aims and objectives, and finally, some ways of testing whether these objectives have been fulfilled	Teacher, NSW
The total program of the educational system established to meet the needs of the community and the individual child	Department Head, QLD

The major difficulty in classifying responses was in deciding the cut-off point between broad and narrow definitions because often the responses could be viewed as forming a continuum;

e.g. 1.	Course or courses set down for study	Teacher, NSW
2.	The course work completed by students attending the school	Teacher, SA
3.	Subjects offered	Department Head, QLD
4.	The whole range of studies offered in a school	Teacher, NSW
5.	What is offered by the school in terms of subjects offered, how they are taught and non-subject areas for student development as a person	Teacher, Vic.
6.	The sum total of the school's planned activities including courses	Department Head, ACT

To qualify for inclusion in the category of broad definitions, the response had to include more than just the subjects offered in a school. There had to be inclusion of additional phrases such as - the total program, the whole range of studies, the process of teaching the material, etc. On this basis the first three examples given above would be classified as narrow definitions, and examples 4, 5 and 6 as broad definitions.

3. Other

This category includes responses considered unusable - in that they did not really answer the question or were ambiguous. Examples are given below.

Questionnaires from universities, colleges, etc.	Teacher, QLD
I don't know (angry and tired!)	Teacher, Tas.
That which is available	Teacher, QLD
Planned picking at the coal face	Principal, NSW
A direction. A non-prescriptive objective	Teacher, NSW

Curriculum as reality - as experienced by students

Within the category of broad definitions, those which defined curriculum in terms of what actually happens to students, rather than, or as well as, what is actually planned for students, were classified in a separate sub-category.

This included responses which referred to what the students actually do or experience.

All that happens to students as they pass through school	Principal, SA
The total school program as judged from the points of view of the attitudes, skills and insights which students actually receive as distinct from what is alleged to occur	Teacher, Vic.
The total learning experiences, planned or otherwise of any student attending school	Teacher, ACT

Chi-square tests were used to determine whether the frequency of broad vs narrow definitions

(a) differed among the eight different states and territories;
(b) differed among the three different groups of respondents - principals, department heads and teachers.

Additional analyses of the data included an examination of responses by school, to determine whether respondents from the same school shared similar perceptions of curriculum.

RESULTS

(a) Number of Responses

As shown in Table 7.1, the total number of responses was 489, with state percentages similar to those in the national survey.

Table 7.1 No. of Responses to "Define Curriculum" Question as Percentage of Responses to Entire Survey for each State and Total Sample

State	Number of respondents to national survey	State respondents as percentage of total sample	Number of respondents to "define curriculum" question	Respondents to "define curriculum" question as percentage of total national sample
		%		%
NSW	102	17.4	84	14.3
VIC	92	15.7	74	12.6
QLD	64	10.9	50	8.5
SA	110	18.8	100	17.1
WA	86	14.7	74	12.6
TAS	98	16.7	83	14.2
ACT	22	3.8	18	3.1
NT	12	2.0	6	1.0
TOTAL	586	100.0	489	83.4

(b) Nature of responses

The responses reflected a wide variety of perceptions about curriculum, ranging from the literal dictionary meaning of "course of study" (Concise Oxford) to

a running-on, a course ... as a river runs it course to the total life experience; — Principal, Vic.

the total educational and life experiences of the child — Teacher, Tas.

A selection of responses is given below to illustrate this diversity.

Some respondents defined it in terms of content, subject matter and set courses of study.

The basic content to be covered in a particular subject — Teacher, Tas.

The prescribed course of study for students at a particular level — Teacher, QLD

A set or basic course - determined by the Department of Education — Teacher, NSW .

Most respondents defined curriculum as intention - as a plan of some sort - plans for particular courses, classroom plans, whole school plans.

Planned program of instruction in a particular course — Department Head, WA

Curriculum is the plan for what happens in a classroom ... — Teacher, WA

Curriculum is the total planned learning experience offered by a community to itself through educational institutions — Principal, SA .

The nature of the plan, however, varied from very detailed, to more open, flexible guidelines.

A rather detailed plan for the teaching-learning process ... — Teacher, ACT

A guideline for a program of learning stating:

(1) rationale of proposed curriculum
(2) learning objectives - skills and attitudes
(3) evaluation suggestions
(4) suggestions for teaching strategies
(5) list of resource material. — Department Head, WA

An adaptable outline which expresses a philosophy — Department Head, WA

A guide to ignore — Teacher, SA .

Some respondents emphasised the nature of curriculum as a document:

Curriculum is the listing on paper of topics to be taught by the school or department — Teacher, Tas.

Curriculum is a document which outlines aims, objectives, content, skills to be covered in a particular subject in a particular year. — Teacher, SA

Some saw it as a statement for teachers to follow:

> The program as laid down for the teacher to follow — Teacher, SA
>
> It is a basic set of objectives and generalizations around which I base my teaching program. — Teacher, QLD.

Others saw it as what is actually taught:

> The stuff you teach. — Teacher, NSW.

And the methods by which it is taught:

> A syllabus is an outline of the content and processes of a course of study. A curriculum is the means by which one transfers the content and processes of a course of study from the pages of a syllabus to the minds of the students — Department Head, QLD
>
> What, where, how, why and by whom something is taught. — Teacher, Tas.

Some respondents defined curriculum more in terms of total activities of the school than just teaching:

> Curriculum is the whole structure of the teaching, learning and activity of staff and students in a school. — Principal, Tas.
>
> The whole range of school learning experiences offered by a school — Teacher, ACT
>
> My definition of curriculum, as I have found out by reference to the latest published material on the subject, is the total educative experiences — Department Head, WA
>
> All things involved in the running of a school -
>
> buildings
> finance
> staff
> students
> curricula
> grounds
> support staff
>
> — Principal, Vic.

A small number of respondents (5.1%) defined curriculum in terms of what students actually do or experience:

> What the kids do in school — Principal, NSW
>
> The totality of experience that a student perceives during his time at school — Department Head, QLD.

Some responses in this category distinguished between curriculum as intention and curriculum as reality - the official and the unofficial, the overt and the hidden:

> Curriculum is what the student learns at school. It is composed of an official and unofficial curriculum. Part is taught by teachers, part is learned from mixing with other students just by copying their example, and part is transferred from teacher to pupil as an unconscious and unintentional part of teaching. — Principal, NSW

> All learning - intellectual, social and psychological -
> that goes on in a school whether directed and
> planned or undirected and spontaneous. Department Head, SA.

Even though there was such a wide variety of responses, it was possible to classify the great majority of them (98.4%) into either broad or narrow definitions. Only about half of the respondents (49.9%) defined 'curriculum' in broad terms. Tables 7.2 and 7.3 respectively, show the number and percentages classified as broad definitions, narrow definitions and other, by state and by type of respondent. (For a detailed table of this data see Appendix A.8.)

Table 7.2: Classification of responses as either broad or narrow definitions of curriculum, by state (n = 489)

State	Broad def'n of curriculum		Narrow def'n of curriculum		Others	
	Number	%	Number	%	No.	%
NSW (n=84)	29	34.5	53	63.0	2	2.4
VIC (n=74)	40	54.1	33	44.6	1	1.4
QLD (n=50)	22	44.0	26	52.0	2	4.0
SA (n=100)	53	53.0	47	47.0	0	0
WA (n=74)	36	48.6	38	51.4	0	0
TAS (n=83)	46	55.4	34	41.0	3	3.6
ACT (n=18)	14	77.7	4	22.2	0	0
NT (n=6)	4	66.7	2	33.3	0	0
TOTAL (n=489)	244	49.9	237	48.5	8	1.6

$X^2 = 15.34$, df = 6, significant at the .025 level.

It was found that respondents' perceptions of curriculum as either a broad or narrow concept differed among the states, e.g., a much larger percentage of ACT respondents (77.7%) defined curriculum in broad terms, than did those in NSW (34.5%). NSW in fact had the highest proportion of respondents (63%) who defined it narrowly.

Table 7.3: Classification of responses as either broad or narrow definitions of curriculum, by types of respondents (n = 489)

	Broad def'n of curriculum		Narrow def'n of curriculum		Others	
	Number	%	Number	%	No.	%
Principals (n=64)	54	84.3	9	14.1	1	1.6
Department Heads (n=127)	62	48.8	65	51.2	0	0
Teachers (n=298)	128	43.0	163	54.7	7	2.3
Total (n=489)	244	49.9	237	48.5	8	1.6

$X^2 = 36.67$, df = 2, significant at .01 level.

Significant differences were also found among principals, department heads and teachers in their perceptions of curriculum. A much larger proportion of principals (84.3%) defined it in broad terms than did department heads (48.8%), and teachers (43%). This, perhaps, is a reflection of the more holistic view of the school that principals may have by virtue of their unique position.

Of the small number of respondents (5.1%) defining curriculum in terms of what students actually experience, principals also made up the greatest proportion (60%). Table 7.4 reports the number and percentages of respondents defining curriculum in this way.

Table 7.4: Frequency of responses defining curriculum of reality - as experienced by students, by types of respondents

	Curriculum as reality definition	
	No	%
Principals (n=64)	15	23.4
Department Heads (n=127)	3	2.4
Teachers (n=298)	7	2.3
Total (n=489)	25	5.1

The 489 responses analysed in this "definition of curriculum" question represented 97 schools (the proportion of responses received per school being similar to the total sample of the national survey).

When responses were analysed by school, it was found that only 5 schools (7.8%) of those with 4 or more respondents (66), had responses classified in the same category. In these 5 schools, all survey respondents defined curriculum in broad terms.

By far the more common pattern, however, was that within individual schools, respondents had differing perceptions of curriculum. This can be seen in the example given below.

Every experience they encounter during their time at school, the obvious and the hidden. What they think they are being taught and what is learnt by experience and example, etc.	Principal
The providing of new and interesting experiences for students by making the maximum use of the facilities and staff available.	Department Head
A curriculum is a course of study	Teacher
To me, word curriculum means the total school teaching-learning program, including sport, recreational training, school camps, etc.	Teacher
Sequential lessons or a series of lessons that fit into an overall plan.	Teacher

All respondents quoted above were from a single sex (male), government, technical high school in a rural area.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the responses to this open-ended question is the diversity of perceptions about what the term "curriculum" actually means. There is certainly no common definition shared by teachers in Australian schools. Even within the categories of broad and narrow definitions there were widely divergent views.

As well as the diversity of perceptions across Australia generally, there were differing perceptions between states, and between principals, department heads and teachers. Of more crucial importance, however, is that, even within individual schools, there were differing and often conflicting views.

This, in part, is probably due to the changes in curriculum thinking and actual curriculum practices which have taken place in our educational institutions over the last decade. The diversity of views could also, perhaps, be seen as arising from and contributing to a lack of communication among those engaged in the educational process. This uncertainty about what the term "curriculum" refers to would be reflected in similar confusion about such concepts as school-based curriculum development, curriculum decision-making and curriculum autonomy - all vital issues to those concerned with schooling.

There has already been enough confusion regarding the above terms and the associated praxis. There seems an obvious need, particularly at the school level, to share our perceptions and come to some agreement regarding them. Otherwise we will not only perpetuate the confusion but create a host of avoidable problems for curriculum development and education in the future.

(2) PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM AUTONOMY

Alan Craig

As reported in Chapter 2, there has been a devolution of authority for curriculum decision-making throughout Australia. Perceptions of members of staffs of secondary schools about the meanings, implications, and advantages and/or disadvantages of this autonomy have not previously been researched. The CAP team decided to explore perceptions via the inclusion of analyses to responses to two open-ended items from the CAP questionnaires, namely:

(i) "What do you understand by the phrase 'curriculum autonomy'?"
(ii) "What does curriculum autonomy mean for you and your school?"

In this section of Chapter VII, detailed analyses of the responses to these items are presented.

An initial reading of answers to the above questions indicated that the use of a questionnaire imposed limitations in terms of the length, written expression, scope and relevance of the various responses provided. Within these limits, however, it was clear that three different types of information could be obtained from respondents:

(a) their interpretations of the term "curriculum autonomy";
(b) their views on advantages and/or disadvantages of curriculum autonomy;
(c) the perceived extent of autonomy available at their school.

A set of categories was constructed and trialled on part of the data. Following refinement, a set of revised categories was subsequently applied to all responses from all states (see Table   of Appendix   ). The results of the analyses of the above three types of information are presented below.

(a) Interpretations of Curriculum Autonomy

Of the different interpretations of the term "curriculum autonomy", 225 76 per cent of respondents gave the same kind of answer (albeit phrased in different ways), namely: it means that the school/teachers have freedom to determine the curriculum, or it means school-based curriculum development. When non-responses are excluded, the figure rises to 90 per cent. Most respondents offering this basic interpretation did so without any amplification or qualification. Typical of such responses were the following:

> Curriculum autonomy is the power to write, plan, effect and evaluate our own curricula.
>
> Principal, NSW

> The responsibility of a school to set its aims and then devise those courses and policies which they believe will realise those aims.
>
> Department Head, TAS

> It is what to a certain extent we already have in Years 7-10 in Victoria. Each school devises its own curriculum.
>
> Teacher, Vic.

However, 17 per cent of all respondents also included in their definitions reference to the meeting of local needs and conditions as being fundamental to curriculum autonomy. The following examples illustrate this point:

> The right and responsibility for the curriculum adopted by a school as evolved by the staff with the contribution of community-interest groups, including parents and in the light of the expressed wishes of students and in cognisance of the needs of the community.
>
> Principal, SA

> The ability of the school and/or subject department to develop, implement and evaluate its own curricula after taking into account due consideration of pupil, teacher, parent and community expectations and interests.
>
> Department Head, ACT.

Also included in the 76 per cent offering the same basic meaning for curriculum autonomy were 15 per cent of all respondents who mentioned freedom from "outside" interference/control as a fundamental component. The following examples show this particular emphasis:

> .... a school is allowed to devise its own curriculum without being dictated to by a state controlling body.
>
> Teacher, NT

> That each school be free to choose or design its own curriculum and method of implementation, and not be required to submit it to the Board for approval.
>
> Teacher, WA.

Three per cent of all respondents included reference to both freedom from outside control/interference and meeting local needs and conditions in their definition of curriculum autonomy. One example of this dual emphasis was:

> That the curriculum ought to be free from impersonal style restraints e.g. of spaces, of equipment, of staffing schedules based on numbers, of unreasonable financial constraints, of externally imposed curricula, of time-tables which reflect these restraints. Rather, that the curriculum should reflect the needs, special characteristics of that community, the students and teachers. A personal thing not controlled by the impersonal.
>
> Principal, Vic.

(b) Advantages/Disadvantages of Curriculum Autonomy

The percentages of respondents who commented on advantage and disadvantages respectively, of curriculum autonomy were fairly small. The most frequently mentioned advantage was cited by only 28 per cent of respondents (see Tables and of Appendix) However, more categories were generated because people were presenting ideas spontaneously and were not responding to structured questionnaire items.

Respondents perceived what were classified as eight major advantages/benefits associated with the granting of freedom to schools. These are listed below, with the percentage of respondents shown in parentheses:

(a) greater freedom, flexibility and variety in the curriculum, programs, courses in general (28%);

(b) better able to meet needs and interests of individual students and teachers at the local school level (26%);

(c) greater teacher involvement, satisfaction and commitment (12%);

(d) freedom to vary or select aspects of the curriculum guidelines supplied by the Department of Education (9%);

(e) freedom from external restraints, pressures and interference (7%);

(f) able to offer a particular elective or develop new school-based courses (6%);

(g) more personalised and meaningful learning for students (5%);

(h) greater parent/community participation in school activities (2%).

Respondents also perceived what were classified as eight major disadvantages/limitations to curriculum autonomy, namely:

(a) limitations imposed by "external" factors, e.g., parents, exams, Education Department, employers (14%);

(b) extra work in planning and co-ordination of curriculum development (8%);

(c) lack of experienced/qualified staff for curriculum development (6%);

(d) greater confusion, lack of guidance, and lower standards in the curriculum, programs, courses in general (5%);

(e) negative beliefs and attitudes of staff towards curriculum autonomy (5%);

(f) lack of finance and/or resources (4%);

(g) mobility of staff and/or students (2%);

(h) it causes division and frustration in the school (2%).

In commenting upon advantages and/or disadvantages of curriculum autonomy, the majority of respondents made only a few brief points. Several individuals, however, took some trouble to outline their points of view in great detail. To quote from a typical lengthy negative reaction:

> Although curriculum autonomy appears to be ideal in theory, I feel that if implemented then curriculum autonomy will result in too great a variation between courses offered in individual schools. Curriculum development is an area requiring specialist skills. Generally school staff members do not possess the skills or time to devote to such a complex task, while the community does not possess the knowledge of educational theory to enable them to appreciate the problems associated with implementing and devising a course of study.
> Influential but misguided individuals could well exercise a detrimental influence in individual schools. It appears to be an inefficient means of structuring curriculum and far too nebulous an approach to the problem ...
>
> Teacher, WA.

A typical lengthy positive reaction:

> That the school can set, examine and revise its goals and the means used to achieve them. It means that as a member of staff I can assist in this re-evaluation. It means I am not required to teach subject matter which is externally imposed, irrespective of the abilities, expectations and interests of the students. It means our school can exploit the diversity which the students at this school (from different ethnic backgrounds) bring with them to school. It means each individual student has a right to expect that his expectations, abilities and interests will be taken into account.
>
> Teacher, Vic.

Two typical quotations embodying both positive and negative reactions to curriculum autonomy:

> 1. Long hours of discussion, deferral, re-commitment and soul-searching.
> 2. A degree of professional development and commitment in staff members much more pronounced than in previous years.
> 3. Impatience, inefficiency, delay and uncertainty while conflicting vested interests are reconciled.
> 4. A sense of purpose, responsibility and involvement which we would not willingly surrender.
>
> Principal, SA.

> A hell of a lot of work! It throws a great responsibility on the position of Senior Master. The problem is that many staff are too engrossed in just keeping up with teaching their classes to be interested in establishing philosophical principles and devising the courses which express them. On the other hand, once the extra responsibility is accepted, there are advantages in the teacher understanding and believing in what he is doing and in the curriculum being tailored to local conditions and requirements.
>
> Department Head, Tas.

Respondents were not asked specifically to compare the advantages with the disadvantages of curriculum autonomy. Thus, it was not possible to make quantitative comparisons within and across states. However, a striking feature of the data was that, in all states except Queensland, a greater percentage of respondents mentioned advantages than disadvantages of curriculum autonomy. (This data is summarised in Table of Appendix , which provides for each state/territory the two or three most frequently cited advantages and disadvantages.)

(c) Perceived Extent of Curriculum Autonomy Available

Responses concerning perceptions of the extent of autonomy available were placed into three categories, according to whether "full autonomy", "partial autonomy", or "little or no autonomy" was perceived as available.

The following quotations illustrate responses which were categorised as reflecting perceptions of the availability of "full autonomy":

> There is no outside authority (e.g. Education Department) imposing a standardised curriculum. This means the school can set a curriculum to suit its staff, students and environment. It means the individual teacher can teach what he/she desires.
>
> Teacher, Vic.

> A great deal of freedom and consequently responsibilities. We choose our own Science courses and have established a school science program for low achievers. Here of course we have a different set of objectives, so necessarily all the other changes also follow. School-wise it means more consultation and discussion regarding e.g. overlap of content, etc.
>
> Department Head, QLD

> It means that innovations in content and its presentation can be made by the individual teacher - that units of work can be prepared without the pressures of an external influence, that the school also can become an autonomous body and within that school, the teacher has the incentive to experiment and improve the curriculum offered by the school.
>
> Teacher, SA

> Fortunately in our school staff members are encouraged to develop their own courses and a committee (elected by the staff) has been formed to assess the merits of each course. Within the English Department, staff are at liberty to teach what they like and how they like.
>
> Teacher, WA .

The following responses are typical of respondents who claimed to have "partial autonomy":

> Questioning, direction seems to emerge officially when articulate members of the community raise issues at official school and Education Department levels. Community expectations do impose that restriction on local school autonomy.
> Principal, Vic.

> Quite a lot, although I am still controlled by the requirements of the Department of Education. In doing, or allowing to be done, areas outside this requirement, places me in a position where I may be castigated by my superiors.
> Department Head, QLD

> School if able to offer a quality program in the core subjects, and the range of activities and other areas of interest varies according to the staff. We are free within the guidelines of the ... core curriculum - Adolescent Concerns, Language, Maths, Physical Environment, Social Environment, Arts and Crafts, Physical Education.
> Department Head, Tas.

> We have not got complete curriculum autonomy at this school as every course must be registered with the Education Authority.
> Teacher, ACT.

The following quotations exemplify the "little or no autonomy" category of responses:

> At the moment while we are ruled by a Higher School Certificate - it is a pipe dream - Utopia perhaps.
> Department Head, NSW

> 'Freedom and Authority' Memo from the South Australian Director-General meaningless as most Principals (this one anyway) afraid to appear to be different. Curriculum is decided by the Education Department.
> Teacher, SA

> There is very little of it - T.A.E. courses dominate this Education System. The acquisition of knowledge is often considered synonymous with education.
> Principal, WA

> .... it means little, as the school has little autonomy really, so far as the academic aspect is concerned.
> Teacher, Tas.

Fifteen per cent of all respondents reported little or no curriculum autonomy available to them. Interestingly, these respondents mentioned the same types of restrictions and limitations as those who claimed to have partial autonomy which suggests that the severity of any particular limitation to curriculum autonomy is very much a matter of individual perception.

The percentages of each type of respondent (principal, department head, teacher) responding within each of the above three autonomy categories are shown by state (or territory) in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5 Perceived Extent of Curriculum Autonomy Available by Respondent Type and State (or Territory). (n = 429)

Respondent State & Type		Category 1 Full Autonomy Available		Category 2 Partial Autonomy Available		Category 3 Little or No Autonomy		Total
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n
NSW	P	2	28.6	4	57.1	1	14.3	7
	DH	11	40.7	12	44.4	4	14.8	27
	T	18	48.6	10	27.0	9	24.3	37
	TOTAL	31	43.7	26	36.6	14	19.7	71
VIC	P	7	58.3	5	41.7	0	0	12
	DH	9	81.8	2	18.2	0	0	11
	T	32	76.2	9	21.4	1	2.4	42
	TOTAL	48	73.8	16	24.6	1	1.5	65
QLD	P	2	28.6	5	71.4	0	0	7
	DH	5	41.7	2	16.7	5	41.7	12
	T	2	9.5	10	47.6	9	42.9	21
	TOTAL	9	22.5	17	42.5	14	35.0	40
SA	P	8	66.7	4	33.3	0	0	12
	DH	11	52.4	10	47.6	0	0	21
	T	39	66.1	11	18.6	9	15.3	59
	TOTAL	58	63.0	25	27.2	9	9.8	92
WA	P	2	25.0	2	25.0	4	50.0	8
	DH	8	50.0	3	18.8	5	31.3	16
	T	23	53.5	6	14.0	14	32.6	43
	TOTAL	33	49.3	11	16.4	23	34.3	67
TAS	P	8	66.7	4	33.3	0	0	12
	DH	11	50.0	9	40.9	2	9.1	22
	T	21	56.8	15	40.5	1	2.7	37
	TOTAL	40	56.3	28	39.4	3	4.2	71
ACT	P	2	100.0	0	0	0	0	2
	DH	3	100.0	0	0	0	0	3
	T	10	83.3	2	16.7	0	0	12
	TOTAL	15	88.2	2	11.8	0	0	17
NT	P	0	0	0	0	1	100.0	1
	DH	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0	2
	T	3	100.0	0	0	0	0	3
	TOTAL	4	66.7	1	16.7	1	16.7	6
AUST	P	31	50.8	24	39.3	6	9.8	61
	DH	59	51.8	39	34.2	16	14.0	114
	T	148	58.3	63	24.8	43	16.9	254
	TOTAL	238	55.5	126	29.4	65	15.2	429

Note: P = principals; DH = department heads; T = teachers.

Altogether 56 per cent of respondents claimed that they had full or complete curriculum autonomy.

Generalising across respondents from all states and territories, 85 per cent reported full or partial autonomy compared with 15 per cent who reported little or no curriculum autonomy. There were marked differences across states, with the percentages of respondents who claimed to have full curriculum autonomy varying as follows: Queensland (23%); New South Wales (44%); Western Australia (49%); Tasmania (56%); South Australia (63%); Northern Territory (67%); Victoria (74%); and the A.C.T. (88%). Conversely, the percentage of respondents reporting "little or no autonomy" was highest in Queensland (35%) and lowest in the A.C.T. (0%).

Thus, Queensland respondents perceived a fairly limited degree of curriculum autonomy. By contrast, most respondents from New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania claimed at least partial autonomy. Moreover, a substantial majority of respondents from South Australia, the Northern Territory, Victoria and the A.C.T. reported full curriculum autonomy being available.

DISCUSSION

The major interpretation of the term "curriculum autonomy" offered by most CAP respondents was consistent with the views of curriculum "experts". Their responses seemed fairly attuned to the pervasive change in patterns of curriculum development occurring across Australia over the last decade, giving teachers more responsibility in determining the curriculum. The willingness of respondents to respond to an open-ended question, and to itemise various advantages and disadvantages of curriculum autonomy further suggested that there has been considerable "grass-roots" discussion of this movement.

The fact that certain advantages and disadvantages were raised more often than others does not necessarily mean that secondary teachers perceived them to be the most important results of granting curriculum autonomy. Nevertheless the frequently-mentioned advantages of "greater freedom, flexibility and variety in the curriculum", "better meeting local needs and interests" and "greater teacher involvement, commitment and satisfaction", as well as the disadvantages of "extra work/time" and "lack of experienced/qualified staff" are consistent with research findings. Analyses of CAP data from structured items (reported in Chapter V1) indicated that teachers perceived three main limitations to school-based curriculum development as "lack of time", "lack of finance" and "staff mobility". The latter two factors were not mentioned so frequently by respondents in the open-ended section of the questionnaire, as analyzed in this chapter.

The data on perceived advantages and disadvantages of curriculum autonomy also revealed a wide range of reactions to the question of curriculum autonomy. At one extreme were the respondents who could see only benefits arising from the granting of curriculum autonomy, while at the other were those who focussed exclusively on disadvantages. Many respondents recognised both positive and negative aspects involved in the granting to schools of such freedom in curriculum decision-making. Of significance was the almost nation-wide trend for respondents spontaneously to raise advantages more often than disadvantages. This finding suggested that, although the movement towards increased curriculum autonomy and SBCD has been initiated and strongly influenced by central authorities at state and national levels, many teachers at the local level have accepted and welcomed the freedom granted.

Further evidence of this teacher acceptance came from the findings that most respondents perceived at least some degree of curriculum autonomy being available in their school. Nevertheless, the marked differences in the perceptions of respondents from different states reflected the variety of administrative policies adopted. This too is confirmed by other CAP data in Chapter V1.

Of the six states, Victoria had the highest perceived degree of curriculum autonomy. This state not only granted freedom to schools, but was also the first to move officially in this direction. In South Australia, the "Freedom and Authority" memorandum released in 1970 gave similar opportunities for freedom in curriculum development. The lesser perceived extents of curriculum autonomy in Tasmania, Western Australia and New South Wales may relate to the fact that official moves towards autonomy have occurred more recently. Moreover, these states have proceeded more slowly and perhaps more cautiously in terms of policy. They have maintained central statements for curriculum through the syllabus committees of the various study boards, while at the same time they have produced less detailed and less prescriptive syllabuses than formerly, and provided some encouragement of and support for regional as well as school-based initiatives in curriculum decision-making. Of all states and the ACT, respondents from Queensland perceived the existence of the least amount of autonomy.

The perceived high degree of curriculum autonomy available to secondary staffs in Northern Territory and the A.C.T. reflected, to some extent, their unique position in Australian education. In the early 1970's, both territories encountered the opportunity to establish new education systems and both adopted the policy that schools should assume a greater degree of autonomy for curriculum than had been the case in their pasts.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this sub-study revealed a wide range of perceptions about curriculum autonomy held by secondary school staff across Australia. There was evidence that teachers, department heads, and principals are aware of and that many accept the moves which grant schools more freedom and responsibility to determine the curriculum. However, within and across states, respondents varied greatly: not only in their opinions about the advantages and disadvantages associated with curriculum autonomy, but also in the degree of autonomy reported to be available to them in their schools.

> ...schools can be creative only when they have at least a minimum amount of autonomy vis-a-vis their environment. Autonomy alone, however, is not a sufficient condition for creativity. Of more importance, is the extent that it is used by educational institutions. (CERI, 1978: 55)

(3) PERCEPTIONS OF THE IDEAL CURRICULUM

Niki Kallenberger

In a context of increasingly decentralised curriculum decision-making, the value of teachers sharing their perceptions of an ideal curriculum becomes very real. In considering an ideal, one is forced to confront the values s/he holds: what is the best of all possibilities? What is the highest towards which we should aim? What do I value most in my classroom? ... in education generally? By sharing ideals, teachers - the new decision-makers - can identify values which shape the decisions they help to make.

One of the open-ended questions included in the CAP national survey sought respondents' perceptions of an ideal curriculum. Specifically, teachers, department heads and principals were asked:

> What do you personally consider as some key features of an ideal overall curriculum, from the viewpoints of both students and teachers for the first four years of secondary school?
>
> (Note: (i) Please be quite spontaneous!
> (ii) Assume you have absolute freedom without limitation of staff or resources.
> (iii) Regard 'overall' as meaning the whole range of the school activities.)

While approximately half a page was left for respondents to write their responses on, the suggestion to "add extra pages if you wish" was also made (T71, H88, P73).

Shared values, areas of strong common accord and divergent views held by a representative sample of decision-makers can be seen in responses to this question. The values represented here are widespread in their range along virtually any continuum; they reflect shared beliefs and idiosyncrasies; they are most frequently unrelated to a respondent's position in a school, his/her state of residence, the subject/s s/he teaches and his/her perception of the status quo; they are articulate and ambiguous, optimistic and cynical. The responses examined range in length from a few words to several handwritten pages. The diversity seen here is awesome but exciting. That decision-making is a complex and value-laden process cannot be denied. Harrison (1979:320) suggests that

> As [curriculum decision-making] is a value-laden process, values need to be shared openly and discussed, with a view to arriving at some shared meanings and agreed and/or accepted, though diverse, values. Where there is a conflict of ideas, values or personalities in [school-based curriculum decision-making] these persons need to be helped to face the conflict openly and honestly in an endeavour to reach mutual understanding and acceptance.

"T", "H" and "P" are used to identify the appropriate CAP Questionnaire, where "T" indicates "Form A: Teachers"; "H" indicates "Form B: Department Heads"; and "P" indicates "Form C: Principals". The numerals following indicate the questionnaire item number.

That the values which stimulate and shape curriculum decision-making can be expressed and shared in a meaningful way is now undeniable. How these values were identified and possible meanings they have for curriculum decision-makers follows.

METHODOLOGY

The entire set of national survey responses (n=586) was used in the analysis of this question. Initially respondents' answers from three schools in each state and territory were read. Seventy-four key features of an ideal overall curriculum were identified in these responses by extracting phrases of central meaning in each answer. From this list, the twenty-one most frequently occurring features were identified and used as a basis for defining twelve categories. It was found the key features originally identified could be accommodated in these twelve categories.

The complete samples of responses from three states were coded according to the twelve categories, indicating whether or not the respondent included that feature as a component of an ideal junior secondary curriculum. Analysis of this coding indicated a further refinement of the categories was necessary to clearly delineate features and to distinguish accurately between them. Seventeen mutually exclusive categories evolved from the data and operational definitions were specified for each category. The entire set of responses were then coded accordingly. A response might be included in all seventeen categories, but it had to be included in at least one.

Definitions of the seventeen categories used are as follows:

1. The ideal curriculum stimulates the intellectual development of the child. The terms "mental", "cognitive" and "intellectual" were read interchangeably in this context. Phrases such as "intellectually stimulating", and "exposure to the mental spheres of human activity" identified a response for inclusion in this category.

2. The ideal curriculum provides for the physical development of the child. Responses containing phrases such as "psychomotor development", "physical education","individual sports of all types" and "physical achievements" indicated categorisation. Health education was also included here.

> Physical development combined with the desire to consume a
> balanced diet, which should give them a chance to live
> healthy lives.
>
> Department Head, NSW.

3. The ideal curriculum facilitates the emotional development of the child. "Greater awareness of self", "stimulation for self development", "personality development" or "emotional health" were key descriptors here.

4. The ideal curriculum fosters the social development of the child. "Social skills", "human relationships", "interaction skills", "socialisation of the child" and "courtesy and respect for others" are typical of responses which define this category.

5. The ideal curriculum provides for the moral development of the child. Responses categorised here included only specific references to religious knowledge, values education or moral or spiritual activities.

> Should provide basic built-in values (morals) as a basis for children to develop along. A system which has no moral structure (amoral) leaves kids without any system to base their views on. In my opinion this is partly the reason for the anti-authority rebelliousness of kids increasing today.
>
> Teacher, NSW.

> . . . show that a sound start to life can be found in the knowledge that there is a God and that he has the answer to problems we may face.
>
> Teacher, Tas.

6. The ideal curriculum stimulates the cultural awareness of the child. It enlarges the context of social development to an understanding of one's own culture and the cultures of others, as well as furthering an understanding of the requirements of good citizenship, both in Australia and in the world.

> . . . greater contact with art, music, theatre, dance, art from other cultures . . .
>
> Teacher, SA.

> Provision for cultural activities - e.g. music, art, drama, etc. should be given high priority.
>
> Teacher, Vic.

> Make him a worthy citizen who is able to contribute to the advancement of Australian society.
>
> Principal, SA.

> . . . ideas about their global responsibility.
>
> Teacher, Vic.

7. The ideal curriculum caters for the needs of the individual child. The whole child, his strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, his interests and a consideration of his possible future schooling, be it academic or vocational, should be taken into account.

> It should be fairly broad to cater for the individual talents of the students so that these talents can develop.
>
> Teacher, NSW.

> Each child should be dealt with individually, and experience as much success as possible, so that ideally the curriculum should be tailor-made-flexible, building on the students' interests, but giving him access to as wide a range of activities in later life as possible.
>
> Teacher, Vic.

> All students are not equal. Those who want to be directed should be separated from those who are capable of working independently or are "uptight".
>
> Department Head, Vic.

8. The ideal curriculum prepares the child for the world of work. Literacy and numeracy skills, survival skills such as using public transport or a telephone, or applying for a job fall into this category. Careers education and work experience are included here. Working in today's world implies ever-increasing leisure time, an appreciation of which is another component of this category.

> Must emphasise literacy and numeracy skill development.
> Teacher, ACT.
>
> Opportunity for work experience leading to vocational awareness.
> Principal, Vic.
>
> Give experience in a wide range of leisure activities.
> Teacher, WA.

Often such skills were linked with future outcomes and seen as necessary means to an end:

> To produce competence verbally and in writing so in all situations children can be totally aware and able to appreciate (and to criticise) their world.
> Teacher, NSW.

9. The ideal curriculum emphasises the process of learning, rather than what is learned. Learning, in this sense, becomes a skill in itself and one which should have lifelong application.

> Interesting, stimulating motivation for exploration of present experiences for identification intellectually and their extension in such a manner that "thinking strategies" rather than "factual content" are learnt to cope with the changes of society.
> Department Head, NSW
>
> Emphasis should be on academic and/or technical skills - not so much for the facts or skills involved, but to enable the person to be able to learn and continue to learn throughout their life.
> Teacher, Tas.

10. The ideal curriculum provides a common core of studies for all students. Student-chosen electives to supplement the core is a frequent addition.

> A very firm core of ideas with greater student choice of interest area. The core would be a concentrated effort in all areas on communication skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening).
> Teacher, SA.
>
> Students required to do a limited time with a few core subjects, e.g. English, Maths, Science.
> Teacher, SA.

11. The ideal curriculum offers integration or coordination among subject departments.

> Greater interaction between departments within the school. e.g. Science and Physical Education could work together on several science topics related to motion and others which are covered by both departments.
> Teacher, WA.
>
> A coordinated curriculum involving all faculties which . . . proves to the student the interdependence of these faculties.
> Teacher, NSW.

12. The ideal curriculum involves students, parents, and the community in decision-making processes. It is assumed that teachers and other professional staff are involved as a matter of course.

> [Goals should be] ranked in priority according to an agreement between school and its community . . .
> Principal, ACT

> An open school situation - with the teachers as guides and information-givers only. The students to decide their own needs with the help of their parents, friends, and teachers (if requested to help) . . . School should be much more related to community.
> Teacher, NSW

13. The ideal curriculum takes into account the characteristics of the teachers implementing it. Their skills, interests, and enjoyment are resources which should be used; however, curriculum development implies teacher development.

> Interesting)
> Stimulating) to Teach
> Satisfying)
> Teacher, NSW

> . . . make use of teachers' special interests in sport or hobbies and gives an opportunity to broaden the experience and interests of pupils.
> Department Head, Tas.

14. The ideal curriculum is purposefully planned. Clear statements of aims and objectives, strategies for evaluation, and the sequential ordering of learning are easier to achieve if adequate time is available: thus time for planning is included in this category. It may also involve seeking help from state or regional curriculum consultants.

> So the most important thing to happen is for a school to nut out its own philosophy, aims, and objectives and for the teachers as a whole to make sure that all matter fit into this and has a purpose . . .
> Department Head, SA

> . . . would require intensive planning time . . .
> Department Head, Tas.

> . . . Professional help from consultants to develop really good curricula.
> Principal, NSW

15. The ideal curriculum features a flexibility in its organisation. It may include reducing class sizes, freeing up constraints imposed by external exams, devising new plans for timetabling, or encouraging the use of new venues.

> Get rid of the PEB system - /it restricts/ the majority of the curriculum.
> Teacher, SA

> The curriculum should not be tied down too strictly to the period system. Much learning can be done - needs to be done outside the school.
> Department Head, Tas.

16. The ideal curriculum utilises fully and effectively a wide array of resources. This includes buildings, curriculum materials, audio-visual equipment, the community and people both inside and outside the school.

> - greater use of other teaching methods and aids
> - greater use of community resources.
>
> Teacher, WA.

> Full use made of community resources in terms of people, services, amenities.
>
> Department Head, ACT.

> . . . lots of books and library resources including filmstrips, cassettes, videotapes etc. . . .
>
> Teacher, QLD.

17. The ideal curriculum includes other features. Responses containing unusable answers, indicating the respondent had misinterpreted the question or had supplied an ambiguous reply, were categorised as "other". Another group of responses containing information not accommodated in the categories were also coded "other" and recorded for further analysis.

Two points need to be made in reference to particular responses. First, the terms "affective" and"personal development" were categorised as both "emotional" and "social". Second, categories 1-4 often occurred together and such responses were included in all four categories.

> It must consider not only the cognitive aims of education, but also the affective and psychomotor.
>
> Teacher, Tas.

> The curriculum should develop the students' abilities in social, emotional, physical and intellectual areas.
>
> Teacher, Vic.

The coded data were crosstabulated on several dimensions and a chi-square value calculated for each crosstabulation, using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie et al, 1975) procedures. Questions asked in the data analysis were these:

- How many respondents replied to this question?
- Which categories are most frequently mentioned as key features of an ideal junior secondary curriculum?
- Do respondents' views on the ideal curriculum differ according to the state they teach in?
- Does the respondent's position (teacher, department head or principal) or the subject/s s/he teaches affect his/her view of the ideal in curriculum?

- Are the ideal curriculum features reported here related to respondents' perceptions of existing curricular emphases?
- Are these ideal curriculum features related to possible changes respondents have identified as desirable?
- Are these ideal curriculum features related to the problems respondents perceive as being encountered when implementing planned programs?

RESULTS

As Table 7.6 shows, the total number of responses used in the analyses was 480: state by state proportions resemble those in the national survey sample.

Table 7.6 Number of responses to "ideal curriculum" question as a percentage of responses to entire survey for each state and total sample (n = 586)

State	Number of respondents to national survey	State respondents as percentage of total sample	Number of respondents to "ideal curriculum" question	Respondents to "ideal curriculum" question as percentage of total national sample
				%
NSW	102	17.4	94	16.0
VIC	92	15.7	74	12.6
QLD	64	10.9	44	7.5
SA	110	18.8	95	16.2
WA	86	14.7	66	11.3
TAS	98	16.7	80	13.7
ACT	22	3.8	20	3.4
NT	12	2.0	7	1.2
TOTAL	586	100.0	480	81.9

Table 7.7 reports in descending frequency the occurrence of each category as a key feature of an ideal junior secondary curriculum. Since respondents often mentioned more than one category, percentages total more than 100 per cent.

Table 7.7: Frequency of mention of each category and responses to each category as percentage of total sample, in order of descending frequency

	Category	Number of responses	As percentage of total sample (N=480)
			%
7	(Individual child)	247	51.5
8	(World of work)	187	39
4	(Social development)	124	25.8
6	(Cultural awareness)	120	25
17	(Other)	113	23.5
15	(Flexibility of organisation)	83	17.3
9	(Process of learning)	75	15.6
3	(Emotional development)	73	15.2
11	(Subject integration)	72	15
12	(Parent/student involvement)	69	14.4
14	(Purposeful planning)	68	14.2
16	(Resource use)	66	13.8
2	(Physical development)	57	11.9
1	(Intellectual development)	51	10.6
10	(Common core)	50	10.4
13	(Teacher characteristics)	50	10.4
5	(Values/moral development)	31	6.5

Of the 23.5 per cent of responses categorised as "other", twenty-seven (23.9% of the "other" sample) described a specific subject curriculum, and not an overall one. Ten responses (8.8%) were subject lists and ambiguous in their meaning in relation to the other sixteen categories. Some quality of student discipline (stricter, for example) and non-compulsory attendance at school were each mentioned in 4.4 per cent of "other" responses. Three responses (2.7%) indicated satisfaction with the status quo.

Tables 7.8 and 7.9 respectively show state-by-state and by type of respondent (T, H and P) the cross tabulations with each ideal curriculum category.

Table 7.8: Frequency of mention of each category reported by percentages of responses for each state

	Percentage of state sample								
Category	NSW N=94	VIC N=74	QLD N=44	SA N=95	WA N=66	TAS N=80	ACT N=20	NT N=7	Significance
1	12.8	16.2	11.4	7.4	7.6	11.3	15.	-	
2	11.7	25.6	11.4	7.4	7.6	11.3	15.	-	*
3	21.3	16.2	13.6	13.7	9.1	12.5	30.	-	*
4	26.6	32.4	29.5	31.6	12.1	17.5	45.	14.3	**
5	7.4	6.8	6.8	8.4	3.0	5.	10.	-	
6	27.7	31.1	40.9	24.2	10.6	23.8	20.	-	*
7	50.	48.6	47.7	56.8	54.5	52.5	45.	28.6	
8	34.	48.6	27.3	51.6	27.3	37.5	45.	14.3	**
9	12.8	20.2	31.8	12.6	13.6	7.5	30.	14.3	*
10	12.8	6.8	6.8	8.4	7.6	17.5	15.	28.6	
11	16.	16.2	13.6	10.5	18.2	16.3	15.	14.3	
12	12.8	14.9	18.2	17.9	12.1	11.3	20.	-	
13	11.7	8.1	4.5	12.6	13.6	11.3	5.	-	
14	9.6	14.9	15.9	18.9	7.6	16.3	15.	28.6	
15	14.9	14.9	13.6	17.9	21.2	17.5	25.	28.6	
16	10.6	14.9	15.9	12.6	21.2	11.3	15.	-	
17	22.3	17.6	18.2	15.8	42.4	26.3	15.	57.1	*

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .005$

Table 7.9 Frequency of mention of each category reported by percentages of responses for each type of respondent and total sample

Category	% age of teachers N = 297	% age of department heads N = 122	% age of principals N = 61	Significance
1	10.8	9.8	11.5	
2	12.5	7.4	18.0	
3	16.2	12.3	16.4	
4	26.9	18.0	36.1	*
5	5.1	5.7	14.8	*
6	25.9	21.3	27.9	
7	48.1	56.6	57.4	
8	39.1	32.8	50.8	*
9	17.8	13.1	9.8	
10	8.8	9.0	21.3	*
11	17.2	16.4	1.6	*
12	15.2	11.5	16.4	
13	10.1	12.3	8.2	
14	14.8	14.8	9.8	
15	14.5	22.1	21.3	
16	14.8	11.5	13.1	
17	23.9	23.0	23.0	

* $p < .05$

The subject(s) currently taught by teachers (T15) and the area(s) convened by department heads (H1) were crosstabulated with responses to the ideal curriculum questions. Subject areas included English/reading/language arts, mathematics, social sciences/history, physical/natural sciences, the arts (visual arts, craft, music, drama, etc.), foreign languages, industrial arts, commercial studies, home economics, agricultural science, physical education, special education, general education and other. In all, 238 crosstabulations were calculated: the eight statistically significant results are shown in Table 7.10

Table 7.10: Significant differences resulting from crosstabulations of each category with all subjects taught or all subject areas convened by respondents

Category	Subject taught	Subject area convened	Significance
3 (emotional development)	English/ reading/ language arts		**
5 (values/moral development	Social sciences		**
14 (purposeful planning)	Science		**
17 (other)	The arts		**
	Physical education		**
9 (process of learning)	Industrial arts		*
7 (individual child)	Home economics		*
10 (common core)		English Social sciences	*

* $p < .05$ ** $p =\leq .01$

Responses to the ideal curriculum question were crosstabulated with respondents' reported perceptions on the emphasis within their schools on each of social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development, development of personality, development for careers, development of aesthetic appreciation, preparation for exams and other emphases (T31, P43). As department heads were not asked this question, the sample size for this analysis was smaller than that of previous analyses. (N=442) Out of 153 crosstabulations calculated, only seven were statistically significant. Table 7.11 reports these crosstabulations.

Table 7.11: Significant differences resulting from crosstabulations of each category with respondents' perceived actual curricular emphases

Category	Possible curricular emphasis	Significance
2 (Physical development)	Intellectual development	*
	Preparation for exams	*
3 (Emotional development)	Development of personality	*
5 (Values/moral development)	Emotional development	*
	Development of personality	*
8 (World of work)	Physical development	**
9 (Process of learning)	Other	*
15 (Flexibility of organisation)	Development of personality	**

* $p < .05$ ** $p = .01$

Some possible changes (T47, H56, P57) suggested to respondents were crosstabulated with relevant ideal curriculum features. For instance, a respondent indicating preparation for work as a key feature might have indicated "work experience program" as an actual or desired change. In all, twenty-two crosstabulations of this nature were calculated. In each case, the chi square value was not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Crosstabulations between ideal curriculum features and respondents' perceptions of problems encountered in implementing a planned program (T42, H82, P53) were also calculated. A respondent perceiving "lack equipment" as a problem of implementation might have seen "full and effective use of resources" as a key feature of an ideal curriculum. The seventeen crosstabulations calculated here were not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

DISCUSSION

It is very difficult to compare data collected in an open-ended question with that collected by fixed-choice ones. The strengths and weaknesses of open-ended questions need to be considered carefully in the design of such an instrument as that used in the CAP national survey. While an open-ended question undoubtedly widens the range and quality of responses, it will also produce unusable responses, or responses which cannot be easily or reliably related to other aspects of the survey. For a respondent who has already replied to as many as twenty-four pages of fixed-choice questions and four open-ended questions, the task of describing one's ideal curriculum must surely be a daunting one. It is no wonder some respondents replied in similar fashion to this Queensland department head:

> Sorry I haven't time for this. As this has taken 2½ hours already and with a work load of x^n hours, completion of the rebuilding of our house, study of two university subjects, spare time has become little more than a delightful pipe dream. Hope what I have been able to submit is helpful.

Other respondents, however, admitted it to be a challenging, worthwhile task and one commented:

"Ah! Now you're really getting to it . . ."

Even though statistical significance in analyses was rare, the open-ended nature of the question produced a multiplicity of answers. The extent to which they have been shared, and the thought-provoking nature of the question are encouraging. To consider the ideal is a demanding pursuit:

that 480 teachers chose to do so speaks highly for the conscientiousness with which they approach their jobs. This evidence of the many ideas and creativity they bring to curriculum decision-making arenas is equally encouraging. And finally, if even one teacher, or one subject department, or one school has shared further their ideas about ideals in curriculum, then maybe an increased effectiveness of their decision-making processes can result.

The ideal junior secondary curriculum described by the combined responses is one which most emphasises the needs of the individual child, while preparing him for his future work. Social development and cultural awareness are next in importance. To achieve these goals, other qualities and a flexibility of organisation are key features of the ideal curriculum. The process of learning is also important. To assist in the emotional development of the child; to integrate traditional subject areas and to involve students, parents and the community in the decision-making process are additional emphases of the ideal curriculum. Of less importance are purposeful planning, effective use of resources, physical and intellectual development of the child, a common core of studies and the characteristics of the teachers who implement the curriculum. Values education received least frequent mention as an emphasis of an ideal curriculum.

The ideal curriculum described by the data varied somewhat according to type of respondent, state, and subject(s) taught, as twenty instances of statistically significant differences were found. (See Tables 7.8, 7.9 and 7.10). These differences raise some questions for further study:

- Does the importance NSW respondents place on social and emotional features of the curriculum reflect the recent push of the Personal Development syllabus? What is the real situation?
- Have the open high schools in SA created an interest in social development, or vice versa?
- Is the bias towards cultural awareness in NSW, VIC, and SA a product of the large migrant populations in each state? Why do similar biases not show up in other states?
- How is the South Australian emphasis on preparing students for the world of work reflected in the objectives, learning experiences and evaluation procedures used by particular secondary schools?

- Why do principals more frequently include social development and values education as ideal curriculum features than teachers and department heads? Is it because they have a more holistic view of the schooling process? Is it a predilection sought by those who select principals?
- Is it the accessible accountability the principal holds in the public's eye which means s/he is more likely to see an ideal curriculum as one which prepares students for the world of work?

Other questions also emerge from an examination of the data:

- Why is values education so rarely mentioned as an ideal curriculum feature when valuing and the sharing of values are such an integral part of the decision-making? If schools choose not to educate for values, what are the implications for their students who, in the future, will be the decision-makers in every area of human endeavour?
- Other analyses (see Chapter 1V) of responses to fixed-choice items. (T59, H37, H64) show respondents report actually spending a very small percentage of their time individualising instruction, despite the fact that "catering for the needs of the individual child" was the most frequently mentioned ideal curriculum feature. Why does this disparity between the ideal and the actual exist? How can the ideal and the actual become more congruent?
- Can the needs of the individual child be truly met if his school is also preparing him to fit into his future niche in the world of work?
- Emotional maturity is sometimes seen as a prerequisite to success in the adult world. If this is so, should an ideal curriculum give emotional development of its students top priority?
- What implications for school-based curriculum decision-making arise when teachers of different subjects have significantly different perceptions of the ideal curriculum? To what extent does the organisation of secondary schools along conventional subject lines perpetuate these differences?

- Why is the ideal difficult to achieve?
- How can the perceptions of an ideal curriculum described here be used to assist teachers involved in curriculum decision-making?

The many issues raised here are indicative of the complex nature of curriculum decision-making processes. There are few constants in teacher perceptions of an ideal curriculum, nor are these perceptions predictable in their relationships to more quantifiable characteristics of teachers. However, within this unpredictable diversity is the stimulation and creativity which can facilitate the achievement of a more ideal curriculum for all those involved in schooling as teachers throughout Australia embark on the values-sharing adventure of curriculum decision-making.

CHAPTER V111

CONSULTANCY

The ethnographic component of the Curriculum Action Project (CAP) comprised two phases, namely:

(1) during 1977, following agreement between the CAP research team and the Eucalypt Grove High School (EGHS) staff for the project to proceed a "participant-observation phase" occupied the remainder of 1977;

(2) following agreement at the end of 1977 that the CAP team should continue during 1978, but also offer feedback to the EGHS staff on the basis of observations, a "consultancy phase" was initiated in 1978.

Thus, during 1978, the investigation at EGHS was supplemented from a purely descriptive case study by a series of "interventions" followed by observations. The design may be considered as being of a time-series type (see for example, Campbell and Stanley, Tuckman) where a series of observations during 1977 were followed by a series of interventions and in turn by a further series of observations. This chapter provides a description of the theoretical bases and the actual forms of the interventions.

The consultancy styles chosen as the bases of the interventions with EGHS staff are described in this chapter. The theoretical bases for the consultancy are first defined, and the actual consultancy role is subsequently described from the analyses of field diary records.

1. THE SETTING

As a result of the 1977 observations and preliminary analyses of data, the CAP team were able to develop descriptions about SBCD at EGHS. Data sources included what members of the staff perceived as characteristics and issues, what the CAP team and the school staff together identified as characteristics, and what emerged for the CAP team solely from reflection on data analyses.

(a) The EGHS Staff's Perceptions

From the 1977 interviews, observations and the CAP questionnaire data, at the end of this purely observational period members of the CAP team were able to identify some generalisations about what the EGHS staff perceived to be the major constraints on SBCD. These factors, comprising their foreground (to use Gestalt terminology) view of their situation, were:

- the hierarchical structure of the organisation;
- the location of school-based decision-making mainly in masters' and mistresses' meetings;
- the lack of departmental or other meetings for SBCD (the content of any meetings held being perceived as curriculum planning, organisational and timetable matters);
- no alternatives being generated to accommodate members who could not attend planning meetings, because of their timetabled commitments;
- inadequate communication channels for informing people about decisions made; and
- lack of time to get together for planning, this latter being seen as the major problem, as in the survey responses.

Data reported in earlier chapters on the whole support these perceptions.

(b) The Shared Perceptions

Staff members perceived other constraints which to them were in the background of their thinking. The CAP team also observed these constraints operating in the school setting. These were:

- the relative importance of particular personalities and styles of acting, necessitating competing for what they needed, with associated feelings of powerlessness;
- the lack of attention to interpersonal relationships, partly due to the policy of segmenting staff into department groups, located in small staff rooms widely separated from each other, exacerbated by the architectural design of the school;
- external influences such as parents, Higher School Certificate requirements, crisis events; and
- the serendipitous, ad hoc nature of communications and decision-making.

Data in earlier chapters also supports this view of the situation.

(c) CAP Reflections

On the basis of these data analyses, during 1978 the CAP team arrived at a number of tentative generalisations about SBCD at EGHS. It appeared that the constraints seen by staff as background issues were really part of the foreground. Those constraints seen by staff as major ones working against SBCD (for example, time for planning, the fixed nature of the timetable) were in fact not the major problems. Many of the difficulties may have been overcome if effort had been directed towards solving the apparently-minor "background" problems, for example:

(i) staff were unaware that many decisions were being made in an ad hoc informal manner, outside the formal meetings assumed by them as the locus of decision-making;

(ii) this ad hoc, individualistic style of decision-making fragmented the structure of the school system;

(iii) because of the absence of a holistic view of the school as a social organisation, staff decisions about objectives, learning experiences, and other tasks for the whole school, were made from an unrealistic and inaccurate view of the setting;

(iv) because of perceived and actual lack of time in meetings, decision-making strategies (where such meetings were held) stressed the task of the school; the total staff group or department staff were then being asked merely to give assent to previously-made decisions;

(v) the principal's view of the school as being the sum of its parts emphasised essentially individualistic approaches to innovation, competition for the resources of time and space, and territoriality, rather than helping to develop an overall strategy to facilitate cooperation in (and therefore more effective implementation of) innovations;

(vi) the timetable was seen as fixed and sacrosanct even though modifications had been made. The staff who were planning the timetable didn't believe that one of the necessary parameters of the timetable should be to provide blocks of time for staff groups to meet for planning. For both these reasons, when such time was available in the timetable, it was accidental. When time was needed, staff had to go to extraordinary lengths to find the time. Variations to the pseudo-sacrosanct timetable for unscheduled excursions, visitors to the school, and crises, were objected to by the staff.

(d) Summary

EGHS participants needed the opportunity with the CAP team to "stand off" and view the total organisation more objectively, to evaluate the perceived reality in relation of their intentions. This would involve a consideration of not only the curriculum (the product) but also the processes by which staff personnel were involved in planning, implementing and evaluating the curriculum and in the total life of the organisation. In other words, the people in the setting needed to engage in a more conscious process of "reflection-on-action in order to transform reality" (Freire, 1972).

At the conclusion of 1977, some of these generalisations were reported to the EGHS staff in writing at a joint CAP EGHS staff meeting. The EGHS staff agreed to a CAP consultancy in 1978 to help them to deal with a number of issues identified during 1977.

2. THE CONSULTANCY

This section describes some specific selected examples or case studies of the ways in which the members of the CAP team were asked to assist EGHS in their curriculum decision-making, and the team's responses to such requests. Feedback reports (called Capsules) were used as a means of informing the staff of the CAP team's activities and results of data analyses.

(a) Case Study 1: Parent Involvement

In November 1977, a questionnaire was distributed by the CAP team to parents of 100 EGHS pupils randomly selected. The main purpose was to obtain parent perceptions of curriculum decision-making at EGHS. At a meeting with EGHS staff on 17 February 1978, the CAP team offered to report some results from the CAP parent survey as a basis for a survey of parent skills suggested by EGHS staff. At a meeting on 8 March 1978, the EGHS staff asked for feedback on parent views, as the first request for assistance from the CAP consultant team.

On 22 March 1978, the EGHS P & C Association requested a meeting with a CAP director to find out what CAP was doing at EGHS. The CAP team decided to attend as a team and to conduct a session where parents were given Capsule 3 and asked to discuss the findings. This was conceptualised as a deliberate attempt to check the perceptions of one group of parent respondents against those of a different group (see Appendix C.1 for a copy of the session outline).

> ... the team initiated discussions by several small groups which centred upon practical ways in which parents could assist teachers in curriculum activities (P & C Newsletter, April '78).

Parents had been given a copy of Capsule 3 and a document called "100 ways parents can help a school". The discussion seemed opportune because

> ... quite coincidentally and independently, the P & C executive just prior to the meeting had already discussed plans for an ambitious program directed at contacting every parent of the school personally to explore their views about greater involvement and possible ways in which this could happen (Field diary notes).

Some precedent for parental involvement had been set since 1977 by using parents as speakers on Science topics in the Years 9-10 Science curriculum.

At the P & C meeting held on 22 March, each member of the CAP team worked with a small group of parents as they listed their ideas. Each group then shared these with the total group. Sub-group reports were collected by the CAP team.

> The parents felt encouraged by the interest shown by the staff of Eucalypt Grove High School in seeking parent opinion and they were pleased that their comments and suggestions would be reported to the staff.
>
> One parent commented to David "I did come along to hear you but I'm glad you organised it as you did." (Field diary records)

The day after the meeting (5-4-78), a parent and the principal reported verbally to EGHS staff about the P & C/CAP meeting

> CAP communicated extremely well with the parents (Field diary notes).

The parent said she had come to see what teachers wanted the P & C to do to help them in the school. She stated

> "the P & C have always been accused of living in a little ivory tower"

and went on to say that the P & C wanted to overcome what she called a "lack of communication" between the P & C and other parents, and between the P & C and teachers. What was being done, she said, was to ring up every parent in the school to tell them about P & C activities. She was here today to ask teachers "what ways can we help you?" and to tell them that "we don't want to interfere". She went on to say: "it came through loud and clear last night that we don't want to be the policy makers but we do want to be informed". She then informed the staff that the items the P & C have thought about are:

1. utilising parent expertise to help the school;
2. utilising parents' contacts to get required equipment for the school.

"Ask us and we'll get equipment for you; to save you time, see us and we'll get a parent to do research into the costing of new equipment for you that they have expert knowledge about".

She then finished with: "Do you think this will be a worthwhile exercise?"

The field diary notes recorded the following discussion between this parent and some staff members.

Librarian said "will parents give kids some background in regard to future careers, or else build up a data bank of parents' knowledge of careers".

Teacher: "This would be particularly important."

Parent: "The P & C feel that kids really need career advice."

Career teacher's response: "They're (the kids) still at the exploring stage. It's for them to open up."

then later: "I'd like to talk to you about making tapes from parents about careers.

Another teacher: "We don't know enough about parents' backgrounds. When we do, we have used them; last year we brough in a parent who was a TV producer and one who was a poet."

Parent: "I know your problem has been getting messages home."

Teacher: "The migrant parents' lack of contact is because of the language."

Parent: "We'll try and get a language register. If we don't get them (parents) by phone we'll use letters. We're going to stick with it and build on it next year."

Teacher: "Next term there will be a Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) course. Could you find another six parents to come?"

Parent: "We'll try, but can they get some more information about it?"

Teacher: "I don't know."

Parent: "Look, discuss amongst yourselves what you think we could help you with and tell the principal if you have any ideas."

Parent: "Do you want an end-of-year lunch with parents?"

Teachers: "mumble mumble."

Principal (loudly): "Would you like that!!?"

Teachers: "mumble, mumble, yes mumble."

Teacher: "Could we meet them before then?"

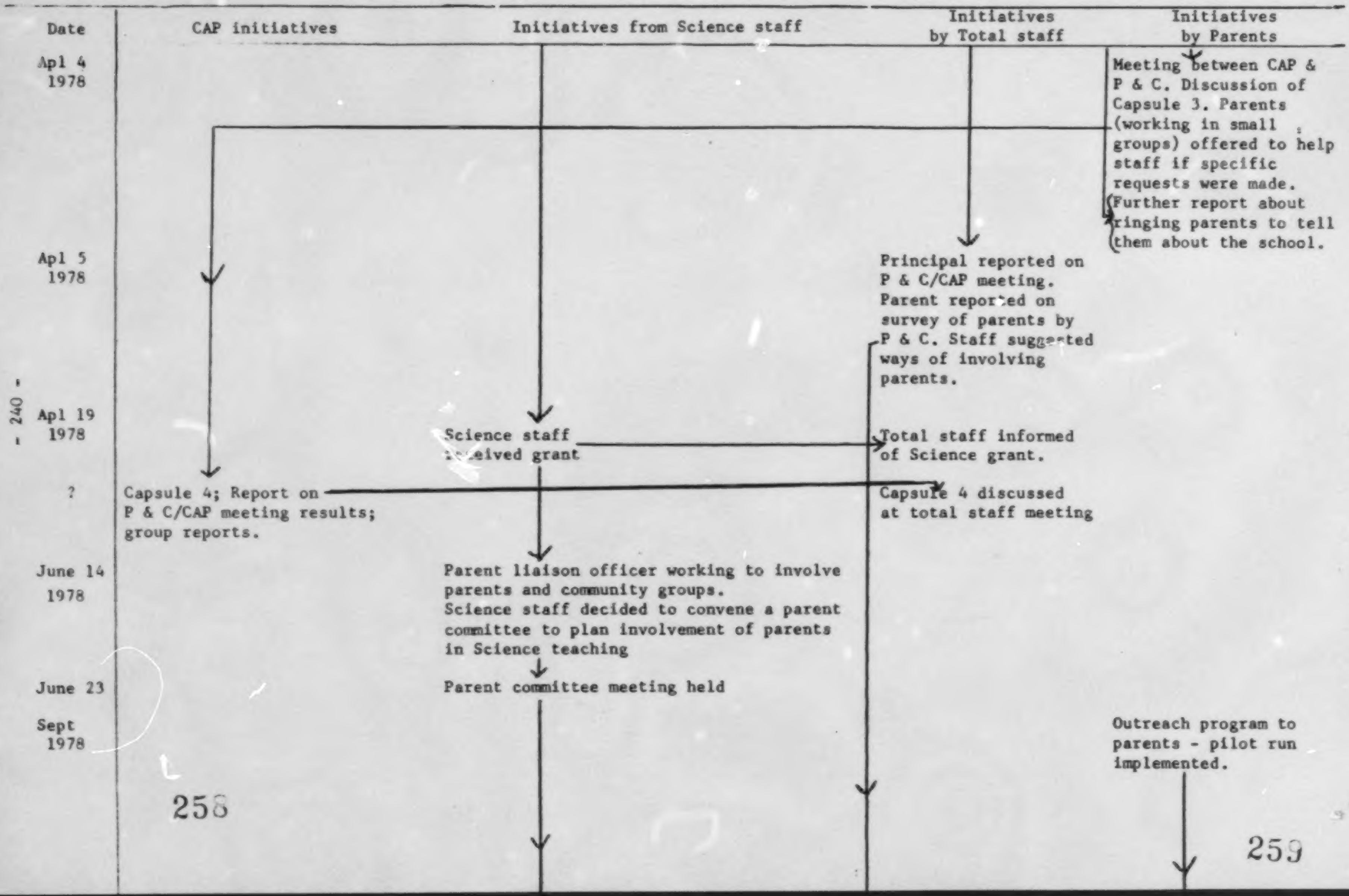
Parent: "Look don't worry; I know you're afraid they'll get you and ask you about little Johnny, but we would have trained them out of that by then." - silence.

Principal: "Parents seem most anxious to have a meeting of teachers. We'll have an evening meeting and an afternoon meeting. That way we make it convenient for them, and then they make it convenient for us."

Following this meeting a further report (Capsule 4,March 29, 1978) was given to staff of EGHS. This recorded verbatim the sub-group reports, outlined the session and summarised the two major parental concerns raised regarding their involvement. Table 8.1 reports CAP initiatives, together with parent and staff actions. The table shows that the report of the parent meeting was discussed by staff at a meeting in May, but that no further total staff initiatives were taken regarding parent involvement except for the holding of a parent-staff luncheon in second term.

On reflection, it appears that the role of the consultants was to set the agenda for staff, in suggesting some action they might consider. The team gave feedback of information at two points to both groups, as a way of checking perceptions. This consultancy was seen to be with the staff rather than the parents. The staff did not follow up the information by initiating action as a total group. However, actions already initiated by the P & C continued throughout the year. It appeared that the parents' task was facilitated by the involvement of, and information provided by, the CAP team. The convener of the sub-committee to implement the parent contact program commented about the "fortuitous content in the meeting (with CAP)".

The agenda-setting activity of the consultants appears to have not matched the perceived needs of staff at that time, and so no action was taken by staff regarding parental involvement.



Date	CAP initiatives	Initiatives from Science staff	Initiatives by Total staff	Initiatives by Parents
Apl 4 1978				Meeting between CAP & P & C. Discussion of Capsule 3. Parents (working in small groups) offered to help staff if specific requests were made. Further report about ringing parents to tell them about the school.
Apl 5 1978			Principal reported on P & C/CAP meeting. Parent reported on survey of parents by P & C. Staff suggested ways of involving parents.	
Apl 19 1978		Science staff received grant	Total staff informed of Science grant.	
?	Capsule 4; Report on P & C/CAP meeting results; group reports.		Capsule 4 discussed at total staff meeting	
June 14 1978		Parent liaison officer working to involve parents and community groups. Science staff decided to convene a parent committee to plan involvement of parents in Science teaching		
June 23		Parent committee meeting held		
Sept 1978				Outreach program to parents - pilot run implemented.

Table 8.1: History of Parent Involvement 1977-79 as observed by CAP team

Date	CAP initiatives	Initiatives from Science staff	Initiatives by Total staff	Initiatives by Parents
1977				Suggestion to have a data bank about parent skills. Brainstorm in P & C about school objectives etc.
1977				
Nov '77	Questionnaire to parents.	Development of Science curriculum plan for Years 9-10 with core teachers - technological - environmental - quantitative strands/themes	Social Science/Science trade time for planning. No mention of involving parents in social science.	
Feb 17, 1978	CAP suggestion that parent questionnaire could be the basis of surveying parents' skills; suggestion that teachers be involved in decisions about the submission and the program supported endeavours to make time to meet.	Meeting between Science staff and two CAP team members about the Science mistress' draft proposal for funding for parent/community involvement in Science teaching Proposal distributed to Science staff and Deputy Principal for comments. Collated by Science mistress.		
Feb 27, 1978	CAP team suggestions about modifications.	Further meeting to discuss the funding proposal. Modifications made by all staff by consensus.		
Mar 8 1978		Submission for school-based initiatives grant.	CAP team met with total staff to negotiate contract. Staff asked for feedback on parent views.	
Mar 22 1978				P & C requested a meeting with CAP to find out what CAP was doing.
Mar 29 1978	Capsule 3 to teachers re parent views plus ideas on involving parents			

Date	CAP initiatives	Initiatives from Science staff	Initiatives by Total staff	Initiatives by Parents
Oct '78		Science meeting to plan 1978 curriculum - no discussion of parents' involvement. Discussion of transition from primary to secondary - how to help primary schools to prepare for secondary science		
Feb 1979		Parent involvement in Science teaching extended to Years 11-12.		
May 8 1979			Social Science Mistress expresses interest in parent involvement in Social Science	P & C Meeting to farewell Principal. Information about community involvement in the school (eg. Science)
May 1979			Meeting between new principal and Parent Outreach representatives Meeting of parent representatives with Masters/Mistresses meeting to report on Parent Outreach progress.	Outreach Program extended. Asked to help in finding people willing to help with PD, careers, interpreting etc.
June 1979			Four teacher liaison with parents appointed, including Social Science mistress.	P & C General meeting Tentative contact for parents to attend Social Science staff meeting. (Why Social Science?)

(b) Case Study 2: Education Department Consultant

During 1977, the Science staff of EGHS had occasionally involved parents as guest lecturers in the Science program of various classes. In October 1977, the Science staff called in a consultant from the Division of Services of the NSW Department of Education to work with them for a day in planning the 1978 program for Years 9-10. The consultant used a systematic problem-solving procedure and traditional objectives approach to curriculum planning, to enable staff to develop plans for action.

A CAP observer at the meeting commented

> Viv starts with the present situation and then moves on. She feeds a lot of ideas to staff in her own terms. Suddenly it struck me that all the men sort into one group and the women in another ... Viv overrides others at times with "I shouldn't do this but ..."

Some of the forces preventing the implementation of a program were identified as

- teachers' attitudes
  (Viv's comment: They're going to need to be changed)
- interpersonal communication
- space
- staff time for planning
- pressure from the Science master
  (The master asked about this. Viv referred it to the group but didn't listen for the answer.) (Field diary records).

By the end of the day, the group had listed 18 tasks for finishing the program, and allocated responsibilities for some of these on a time line.

> Viv commented "It seems to me if you do all of these things in committees ... I will see you next year" (Field diary records).

The observer's overall comment suggested that the day's program was task rather than process in its orientation.

At the commencement of the 1978 school year, the Science staff began to implement the new Years 9-10 program, having continued late in 1977 with the task of developing units. The result was a Science curriculum plan for technological, environmental and quantitative themes or strands. The staff had identified their agenda in response to the withdrawal of external exams for Year 10, and had called in a consultant to help with the planning process. By using a full day and a directive approach, actions were planned and implementing decisions were made. The staff were able to carry out these plans, without further assistance from the particular consultant. It appeared that the staff were able to proceed in a non-dependent fashion.

(c) Case Study 3: CAP Team provides Consultancy Support

A CAP consultancy to the Science staff began on 8 February 1978. A CAP team member was asked to look through the Year 9-10 program to "suggest resources (particularly human) which could be used in the program (especially the technological and environmental strands)." The observer commented

> This was requested in response to the proposal to seek funds to employ a body (2 days a week) to find resources to assist with the Year 9-10 program ... It seemed to me that community resources were to be tapped primarily to fill gaps in the teachers' own knowledge, rather than being an attempt to involve members of the community simply for involvement's sake i.e, the teachers needed help in teaching the program (Field diary records).

This initiative regarding community involvement had been taken by the Science master, Sid. An inquiry about possible funding was then being made by the principal.

The CAP team were then asked to comment on a draft proposal drawn up by Sid about funding.

> Sid introduced the subject of the submission, noted that David had been out when he had the submission with him and has asked to see it and to take it to Macquarie to be looked at. Sid was very happy for someone to give advice about it. He apologised that he hadn't been able to get copies of it to the meeting but proceeded to read through the submission itself for the staff members to hear; and this he did very hastily indeed, saying that he was short of time (which he was) but wanted to get it through so that they could hear what the CAP team had to say. It must have been very difficult indeed for members of the staff to understand what was actually in the document itself. The idea of the submission itself was probably very new to many of the staff present (Field diary records).

During the ensuing discussion, a CAP team member said that

> the teachers themselves and their ideas were really very important and ... that maybe this would be a good reason for the teachers to meet and discuss this so they could come to some consensus and really clarify what they felt about the aims of the program. I suggested that it might be a good idea for the staff to get together and work out what they thought would be the criteria for the liaison person. Sid expressed some concern about the evaluation which was called for in the preparation of the submission. He said he didn't know very much about it, and hoped we could help. I said we would be able to help but we wouldn't do the evaluation for him ... Sid tried to plan a time for the next meeting to discuss the proposal further. Only lunchtime was available to them. A teacher put forward the suggestion that there might be some time on the sports day for them to get together, although some members of the Science staff were on duty (Field diary records).

Sid tried to arrange time on the sports day, to no avail. Arrangements were then made for Science staff to be absent on an afternoon when students were in the hall for a performance by a visiting Indonesian dance group.

On 27 February 1978, three CAP team members attended a Science staff meeting where the proposal was discussed. Only three sets of written comments had been made. There was a lively discussion involving all the science staff. CAP team members suggested that the staff could consider using a parent questionnaire to survey how parents could help the program; CAP members also asked questions about whether time had been allowed for consultation between staff and the teachers' aide, and supported the staff development aspects.

> Our interventions appear to be not on suggestions of curriculum content but were supporting comments for their ideas. We had worked over the previous two weeks to facilitate them taking more time for the meeting, and we noticed that everyone commented during this meeting when in previous records of Science staff meetings that has not been the case ... Major emphases in our intervention were
>
> (a) providing resources to fill out their ideas;
> (b) supporting their initiatives as good;
> (c) naming "their ideas" with curriculum and educational jargon.
>
> They commented that they now know what people meant by curriculum development (Field diary records).

A supporting letter from CAP was sent to the Inspector administering Schools Commission Grants. No further consultancy interventions were made in relation to this issue, though the ways the Science staff found time for planning were used as feedback data to the total staff in a later consultancy effort at EGHS. The submission was sent on 8 March 1978 and the award of a grant was announced on 19 April as a consequence, by 14 June 1978, a parent liaison officer was employed at EGHS. The Science staff also decided to convene a parent committee to plan involvement of parents in science teaching. Over the duration of three terms, 65 classes had guest speakers using 48 different people. In 1979, the parent involvement was extended to Years 11-12.

This example illustrates a consultancy approach by members of the CAP team where staff were assisted with ideas on strategies and processes for working together and coached in curriculum skills related to an issue identified by EGHS staff. Solutions were not offered by the consultants; rather they played a supportive role. Staff were encouraged to see themselves as independent and capable of doing what they wanted to do. All Science staff participated in decision-making. Parents were first consulted and then enabled to participate in decision-making. The implementers were the decision-makers. The result was an innovation that was evaluated and extended the following year, without further intervention of the consultants.

(d) Case Study 4: Consequences of Communication Gap

One department head approached a CAP team member (15-3-78) with a request for help. The member suggested that the departmental staff "... identify questions with which the CAP team could assist". On 19-4-78, the field diary notes recorded that this department head said

> ... it was a great pity not to use the valuable resources of "the experts" from Macquarie University when they were freely available. He would like to have the CAP team or members of it attend a meeting of his department ... The principal had indicated that because of the improved staffing situation, one teacher could now use his talents for drama teaching in association with the English staff, and (the department head) thought that a meeting with CAP team might help to resolve how best to do this. (The CAP member) pointed out that although we were willing to help the staff to do things that they had identified, our role was not to tell the teaching experts what to do. (The department head) said that the staff would need still to identify some appropriate questions (Field diary records).

This was an example of a breakdown in communication on two levels.

(i) The department head had identified a specific dilemma with which they needed help, namely coordinating drama. The CAP member did not perceive this as specific, for whatever reason, perhaps unintentionally indicating an unwillingness to help in this instance. The department head responded in the expected way, indicating a need to identify specific questions.

(ii) The CAP team heard a verbal report of this contact, in which the request was not reported and members omitted to read and/or note the more detailed content of the written report.

The CAP team were not as sensitive as they might have been and had not used multiple sources of evidence in this regard. Therefore with this department the CAP team failed to act on a request for consultant help. In addition, it is interesting to note that data analyses showed that throughout the consultancy period, the staff of this particular department were not as involved in or committed to the CAP undertaking, either not attending or leaving early from total staff/CAP meetings.

(e) Case Study 5: Time Defeats Consultancy

Another department head also approached a CAP team member, seeking help. She stated that her staff hadn't had a meeting to identify a specific issue, and she was unsure about what they might need help with. The CAP member offered to attend a meeting to help the staff identify any issues needing attention and the offer was accepted. The staff meeting was not arranged that year, however, due to difficulties in finding time. This case illustrates a different approach in responding to staff initiatives, demonstrating the different ways in which the CAP team members interpreted the consultancy role.

(f) Case Study 6: Time Together and Communication

Respondents to the CAP national survey indicated that their greatest problem in curriculum decision-making was finding time to plan together. Respondents from EGHS also indicated this as their major problem. In a feedback report to EGHS staff in December 1977, the CAP team reported that lack of time was perceived at EGHS as a major problem both by questionnaire respondents and by interviewees. During 1977, the CAP observers documented some examples of ways of finding time devised by EGHS staff. A short summary of these examples (Capsule 5) is contained in the Appendix.

Having contracted to help the EGHS staff work on any task they identified during 1978, the CAP team responded to requests as they arose. Early in the year, these requests were largely related to departmental groups and to the P & C Association. As time progressed, the issue of finding time for planning recurred in a variety of situations. For example, on 27-2-78, field diary notes describe an interview between three CAP team members and the principal about the just-concluded meeting of the Science staff.

> Have they had the meeting? "Poor Sid, he's been trying so hard to get time to have that meeting; it's so hard to get round to see everyone." Then the principal talked about how hard it was to get time for curriculum development in the school, saying "after school isn't good; people have so many commitments with their families and university courses and so on, you can't ask them to stay back, and everyone's exhausted at the end of the day. All I can do is send the kids home and close the school early to get time for people to meet."

After this interview, the CAP team decided to invite the principal to lunch with them at the university, providing a more informal opportunity in a more relaxed environment for the identification of any total school issue with which the CAP team could assist. At this luncheon, the principal expressed a desire for the team to work with the staff on the issue of "finding time for planning", setting a date for a total staff after-school meeting. This arrangement was later checked with staff at a Wednesday staff morning tea and received their agreement. The principal pointed out that it was to substitute for a regular staff meeting, with the expectation that all members of the EGHS staff would attend.

At the beginning of second term (May), CAP issued Capsule 5 on "Time" to all staff members, as a preparation for the meeting. The first meeting of the consultancy on "Time" did not occur, however, until 5 July, 1978. In order to increase involvement, the principal closed the school early. The EGHS staff agreed to stay until 4 p.m. if they could begin at 2.45 p.m. CAP also issued a poster to all staff members on the theme "Come and get a round tuit" (see Appendix). The meeting was planned in the school library, to commence with afternoon tea. The librarian and library staff assisted with room and food preparation.

Session 1 of this consultancy (see Appendix for session outline) was conducted using an open-ended, inductive-style approach, to enable staff to work on the issue and discover possible courses of action for themselves. The CAP team provided an outline of suggested processes as an agenda-setting activity. Staff were asked to work in small groups of 6-8 persons, and to make sure that groups consisted of members of several subject departments. This strategy was used to facilitate across-department communication. This was a problem discerned by the CAP team from its 1977-78 observations, although it had not been identified as a problem by EGHS staff members.

Details of the processes used in this session are contained in the Appendix with outlines of the three related sessions. The staff were asked to work in small groups to identify "helps" and "hindrances" in finding time (that is, a force field analysis). Small groups then reported to the total group by displaying "flipcharts" written on large sheets of butcher paper. By comparing sheets from several groups, the total group identified common forces. Staff members then chose a hindrance in which they were interested. They formed groups with others interested in the same issue to suggest ways of overcoming the hindrance. Suggestions were again reported on flipcharts and the staff then identified common suggestions.

At the end of this meeting, the staff requested a further meeting to work on the commonly-identified problems of "communication", "interpersonal relationships" and "finding time". They indicated that the former two problems were more pressing than the latter. Background issues had been brought into the foreground of their thinking by the experience of working and talking together in inter-disciplinary groups.

A second meeting was held on 2-9-78. The EGHS staff were given a report of their evaluation of the previous meeting, and were asked to work in small groups to devise plans for taking action in relation to priorities identified by the total group at the beginning of the session. After these plans were presented, the staff indicated the need for a further meeting to identify long-term priorities for action.

The field diary noted some actions implemented by staff after the second consultancy meeting, in which short-term action priorities had been identified.

> There was a copy of Capsule One of the Social Committee in our mail slot. The Social Committee formed last Wednesday has obviously already met and decided to gauge staff response to some suggestions for social activities. Staff were asked to respond to some suggestions for social activity such as
>
> (a) a luncheon on the last day of second term
> (b) an evening function in mid-October at a range of theatre restaurants
> (c) a tennis and barbecue evening when daylight saving starts
> (d) Other suggestions.
>
> Staff were asked to return this to a staff member named.
> (Field diary 9-8-78)
>
> There were book shelves in the common room containing a display of books for teacher reference with a notice from the Librarian and a list of what is displayed. Undated, so we don't know when this was initiated. The book shelves are placed by the red phone partly screening it off so staff who use the phone can't help but see them.
>
> Following on CAP, it was announced that a noticeboard had been reorganised by one teacher, that the Social Committee had met and it was suggested that on Friday night a group of teachers attend play night, that prior to the play they might like to visit the Hotel for a social drink at 7 o'clock. He would send a form round circulated to staff to get their reactions to this suggestion.
>
> The flip charts from our meeting 2 on Time have been removed, (Field diary, 20-9-78).

The third meeting in the series, held on 12-9-78, used an adaptation of the Delphi technique to try to assist staff in reaching consensus about future action (see Appendix C.). Analyses of diary records and observational notes showed that

- the timetable was changed in 1979;
- regular staff meetings were instituted in 1978 where staff could meet for a variety of purposes, for example faculty meetings, total staff meetings, and meetings between staff members teaching the same group(s) of students, to discuss individual students;
- the communication system was changed in 1978.

A further meeting with staff was held on 29-11-78 to report to staff on the overall consultancy. Prior to the meeting, staff were asked to complete an Opinion Survey (Capsule 7). At this meeting (called Recap), results of the opinion survey were reported in writing, the CAP team reported in a written document on their perceptions of the consultancy and a discussion was held at the staff request on what the CAP team had learned by the experience.

In the final meeting for 1978 (held in late November), at the staff's request the CAP team also identified some of their generalisations about the research and consultancy in the school.

A number of staff members expressed dissatisfaction that the CAP team had not told them what to do. This comment pointed up a realisation arising from data analyses undertaken to that point of time, namely, the importance of having shared in negotiating an agreed contract with the school staff. The CAP team had assumed that Capsule 1 (February 1978) had fulfilled this function. However, this contract had not been negotiated with the EGHS staff, clearly enough at the beginning of 1978. In the absence of a negotiated contract, unrealistic and inaccurate expectations for CAP's role had arisen on the part of some of the staff of EGHS.

Analyses of numbers of interviews conducted in 1977-78 showed that the CAP team had personally contacted 31 staff members - and, coincidentally or otherwise, had received back 31 responses to the final questionnaire. This seemed to indicate the importance of contacting as many staff members as possible when conducting a consultancy. These data analyses were reported to EGHS staff at the final 1978 meeting. The CAP team received confirmation of their tentative generalisation.

EGHS staff indicated on the whole that they considered the consultancy to have been worthwhile because of the new ways of working they had experienced, the opportunities they received to get to know one another better, the social interaction which had been initiated, the better communication which had evolved within the school, and the broader perceptions they had developed of the school setting.

When asked by the principal and the CAP team if they wished the consultancy to continue into 1979, the consensus of opinion was "we'd like to try to do it on our own for a while". Thus the consultancy was terminated at the end of 1978 with the final meeting about the particular issue of finding time for planning.

3. THE CAP TEAM AND ITS STRATEGIES

It was considered important to describe the way the members of the research team worked together so that others working on a similar issue might benefit from the insights gained and problems faced. This section deals with the way the members engaged in the planning and evaluation process (except for the methodology used in the school itself, described in the previous section). The way the CAP team worked together demonstrates the way they endeavoured to work with EGHS staff.

(a) Meetings

Initially the decision was made for the CAP team to meet together weekly in order to plan their activities. The six members gathered for at least two hours at each meeting throughout the period of data collection, and for several workshops of five hours during the writing of the report. In addition all members met frequently in various informal settings, both in and out of the university (for example, lunches, course staff meetings, and social gatherings). These contacts contributed to the character of relationships within the team and provided additional opportunities for discussion of and reflection on CAP issues. In the planned meetings, members worked as a group of equals in what is often called a "leaderless group", that is with no designated chairperson. At these meetings the directors of the project assumed no extra status or authority compared with other members of the team, but each person contributed their specific skills and experiences as appropriate to the progress on the task. Minutes of all meetings were kept by one member, with some tape recordings made to assist with accuracy. Copies of these minutes were typed and distributed to every team member so that perceptions could be checked and communication could be maintained especially with members sometimes unavoidably absent. Decisions were reached by consensus, after general discussion of the issues involved. Both the discussion and the decisions were documented so that reasons for significant decisions could be recorded. The first period of each meeting was usually given to sharing of what had happened during the week at the school, so that everyone was "put in the picture". Also, detailed reports of visits were typed and distributed. There was an emphasis on information flow and communication within the team.

(b) Relationships

Members of the CAP team developed a shared belief in the values underlying participation and responsibility for decision-making. Consequently, the team made a conscious decision to model in the team the relationships desired between the CAP team and the EGHS staff. The emphasis therefore was on quality of relationships, with care taken for the needs of individuals by other members of the group. Attention was given to keeping the balance between the individual needs of members and achieving the objectives of the research project, as is necessary with any group working together successfully on a task (c.f, Pearson, 1970). Both aspects of group life were constantly monitored, members working to maintain group cohesion.

(c) Philosophy

Early in the life of the project the team endeavoured to establish a common philosophy concerning ethnographic study, consultancy with school staffs and purposes of schooling. For example, prior to any contact with a case study school, the team decided that the staff of the school would be consulted about the planned research and their agreement sought for the procedures foreshadowed (c.f, 111 B(i)). The decision was taken by the CAP team that any work with the school staff flowing from the 1977 participant-observation process would be within the framework of process consultancy (c.f, 111 B(ii)). This philosophical stance for the case study was identified and acknowledged. Decisions concerning the case study followed from this as consistently as was possible, given the diversity of the team. The determination that the team would not do for the school staff what they could do for themselves (with the converse that they would do what the staff could not do for themselves) was applied within the team itself. Members who had specific skills provided these for other CAP members. For example, a team member with particular skills in computing and statistics assisted other less skilled members to interpret results and to understand the analysis techniques involved. Another team member provided secretarial services for team meetings, releasing others from recording of the deliberations to give time to other tasks.

Experience with process consultation and participant-observation varied within the team. One team member with experience in process consultation demonstrated the techniques involved in early meetings with the school staff, withdrawing participation as time progressed so that other team members might develop the skills and gain confidence in their ability to work as consultants to schools.

The CAP team negotiated a basic philosophy about how each would work as a person within the team. This provided support for each member in the freedom to arrive at different ways of working and at different solutions to problems encountered. This acknowledged the diversity of personalities and abilities. Team members engaged in a process of reflecting on what they were doing in order to develop and evaluate alternative ways of operating. This diversity and independence of operation was kept in constant tension with the need to work with cohesion and agreement on purpose.

(d) Communication

This shared philosophy, affirming diversity, stemmed from and in turn contributed to an emphasis on communication processes within the team. Hence, it was possible for behaviourist, phenomenologist, progressivist, existentialist, moralist, and other eclectic combinations of the preceding philosophic orientations to work together in harmony! At the practical level, this meant that team members examined critically each other's observational reports in the light of known underlying philosophical biases. As individuals prepared written documents, they were discussed and revised by the team. This procedure served to check the reliability of perceptions and ensured that everyone in the CAP team was kept fully informed. Thus, individuals' ideas were shared; members gave and received positive and negative feedback; people developed at their own pace in their understanding and skills. Consensus emerged, rather than convergence being forced.

This emphasis on communication processes helped to develop trust and patience within the team, even though it was at times a frustrating process. The fact that individuals' feelings and motivations were considered important meant that their frustrations were expressed and worked through with the team rather than being repressed to the point where teamwork was inhibited. Holding meetings with a relaxed, casual atmosphere (including in team members' homes) contributed to an effective working relationship. All of these factors facilitated commitment to the team and to the time and effort involved in the project.

(e) Modelling

Once work as consultants was begun, the team decided that an important aspect of the research process was to involve the school staff in that process, thus modelling the research approach itself. This is illustrated by the following examples.

(i) The results of the national survey showed that a commonly-perceived problem in secondary school curriculum decision-making was "lack of time for planning". The staff of the case study school also indicated in a survey that this was their greatest problem and asked the CAP team for help, once results were reported to them. They were asked to work on ways in which their problem might be solved, so that their experience could be shared with other school staffs throughout Australia about time for planning. Thus, the school staff became involved in the research at that point.

Similarly data collected in a survey of opinion from parents associated with the school was presented to a meeting of parents and their perceptions obtained about the issues raised. Thus the questionnaire data was illuminated and elaborated by the comments made by a further group of parents.

In addition, members of the EGHS staff were asked to evaluate critically the way the CAP team had worked within the school in both collecting data and in consulting with them, so that the team could identify appropriate modifications to the research and consultancy processes for application to other situations. This process was referred to by the team as "checking perceptions". It is illustrated in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1: Flow chart: Process of checking perceptions

Collect opinions
|
Collate data
|
IDENTIFY ISSUE
|
Feedback data to participants
|
Workshop on Issue
|
Revise Perceptions
|
Reflection and Tentative Generalisation

(f) Reflection

After the 18-month period of data collection was completed, the CAP team spent a week reflecting on what had occurred during the survey and case study, checking team members' perceptions and planning the form of the reports. After a break of two months while various members went on vacation, a further series of workshops was held to think back over the process, to identify generalisations both about the process of working on the research, and the results of that investigation. The team considered it valuable to have had this period away from the data to enable them to "objectify reality" more clearly, to stand off (as it were) and allow the mind to work on the experience, free of deadlines and of detail. This reflection time was considered especially important because of the "mapping" nature of the investigation and the open-ended, developmental approach of the ethnographic strategies utilised.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING DECISION-MAKING IN CAP TEAM

Both the effective research strategies and the problems faced by any group of people working together on a task were mirrored within the CAP team. These were identified in reflecting back on how the CAP team worked together. The team considered it essential to share the insights gained in order that other research teams working in a similar way will know what to expect to occur.

- The approach to decision-making and teamwork was time consuming. What to an outsider might be perceived as wasted time or inefficient use of time, the CAP team considered to be essential for the process to work and the life of the research group to be maintained.
- Decision-making required practice. Some team members lacked experience with aspects of decision-making. Decisions constantly had to be made and future action hinged on these decisions being followed up. Therefore, consequential decisions about who would implement, when, and how, were essential. Early in the project, the team tended to neglect these consequential decisions. As time progressed, members became more intentional about asking the implementing questions such as:
    - Have we made a decision?
    - Who will implement it?
    - When should it be done?
    - How will we check back on its effectiveness?
- Opportunities to follow up potentially interesting leads mushroomed so that it proved impossible (given the limited time and number of researchers) to research all the leads. The stress-on-ethnographers aspect of this type of research should not be underestimated.
- There were times when it was important to establish priorities for the business of a team meeting. This was achieved by either setting a guideline agenda to be used flexibly, or allowing the direction to be set by the first issue raised, by any member. As the project progressed, the team found the first alternative more useful. It was important, again, to be intentional and monitor this aspect of the process, sometimes to ask the question "Do we need an agenda?"

. The very nature of ethnographic research means that the number and type of decisions are progressively and greatly increased, by contrast to experimental research. Provisional hypotheses ("hunches") have to be generated as the research progresses. These hunches need to be explored, tested against further data collection and analyses, and sometimes discarded as "dead ends". The team found that monitoring-type decisions constantly had to be made - about priorities in following hunches, responsibilities of members for collecting follow-up data, and dead ends which should no longer be followed. When these decisions were not made, for whatever reasons, the team found a high level of frustration. Some important "hunches" were neglected, or "hunches" were followed longer than was fruitful. Any team operating in this open-ended way will need to work out some way of monitoring the "hunching-out" process, for example, by recording hunches and decisions made in minutes of meetings.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major focus of the Curriculum Action Project was upon curriculum decision-making, particularly in the context of Years 7-10. The three broad questions explored were:

9.1 What curriculum decisions were made within the schools?

9.2 Who participated in curriculum decision-making, and how were the decisions made?

9.3 What factors (external and internal to the school) were perceived by respondents as having an influence upon the decisions?

Because of the nature of the research and the sparsity of relevant published parameters concerning curriculum decision-making, it was not possible, even had it been thought desirable, to develop pre-specified hypotheses. It was decided to adopt, as complementary methodologies, both survey and ethnographic research methods. During the course of the research, a three-dimensional model was developed and refined as a means of generating ideas and hypotheses related to the three focus questions. The model is depicted in Figure 9.1.

FIGURE 9.1

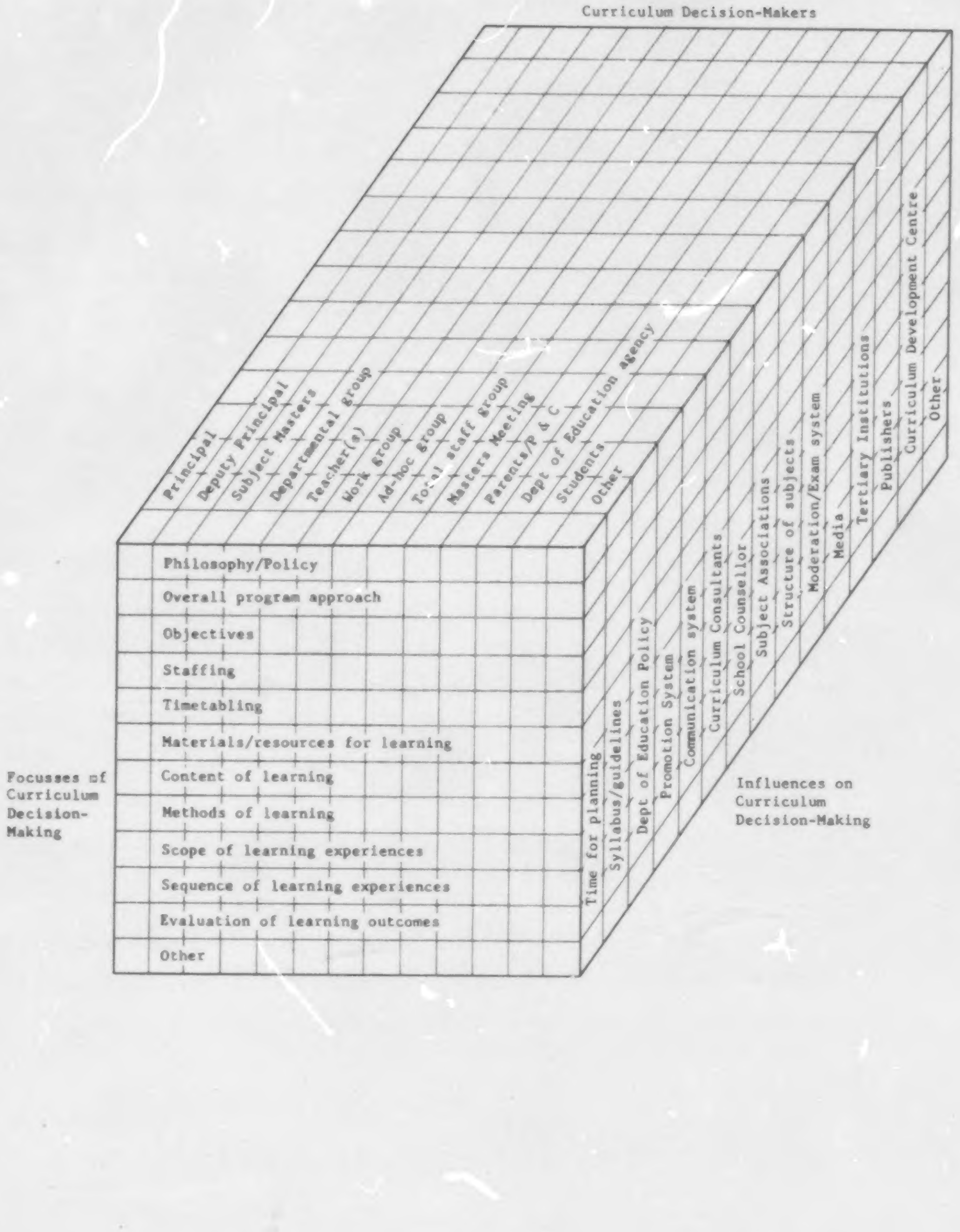


Figure 9.1 The Curriculum Action Project: The Emerging Research Model

Each of the 2340 cells of Figure 9.1 could be explored via research, and data was sought about many of these cells in the Curriculum Action Project. The findings which follow provide an overall picture of the influencing factors. However, it is of crucial importance to realise that widespread and deep differences in perceptions existed between states, between individual schools, and, significantly, within schools.

The findings from the research will now be reported in relation to the three question above, and will be used as the bases for proposing a number of recommendations. The findings represent an amalgam from the survey and the ethnographic studies.

9.1 What curriculum decisions were made within the schools? (c.f., Chapter IV, p.90)

Although it had been decided, for the sake of convenience and simplicity, to adopt the Tylerian "elements " both as the basis for generating questionnaire items and reporting the results, readers should be warned that these elements are inadequate in nature, sequence and comprehensiveness to reflect the complexities of curriculum decision-making.

9.1.1 Objectives

9.1.1.01 There were differences in perceptions both within and between schools about the existence of school objectives, with 71% of respondents considering that written statements of school objectives existed.

9.1.1.02 Objectives were not perceived as having "lots" of influence by three-quarters of teacher respondents, but far higher percentages of principals than teachers perceived such statements as having "lots" of influence on what students do, how students are assessed, and the overall program.

9.1.1.03 The relative importance of statements of objectives were differentially perceived by different subject departments.

9.1.1.04 Overall, respondents expressed priorities for intellectual development objectives with relatively smaller percentages perceiving heavy emphases upon aesthetic appreciation and emotional development. There were differences between States, and parental views differed from those on school staffs.

9.1.1.05 Fewer than one-quarter of respondents considered that objectives originated from the total school staff.

9.1.1.06 In relation to the total number of decisions about curriculum made within the schools, people made very few decisions about objectives.

9.1.1.07 There needs to be serious questioning of the dominant role of objectives in curriculum decision-making as advocated by many influential curriculum writers and authorities. The reality is that the practitioner does not find this approach helpful and in fact it may lead to substantial frustration of the joint efforts of school staffs seeking to improve their curriculum. Alternative springboards to curriculum decision-making such as consideration of classroom learning experiences are likely to prove more productive and more satisfying to participants.

9.1.2 Teaching strategies, Learning Experiences and their Organisation

9.1.2.01 The whole class lesson was the most frequently reported teaching/learning method (79%), with whole class discussions (54%) being the next most frequent. By contrast, small group discussions were used "not very often" or "never" (72%), and a variety of less teacher-directed approaches to learning experiences (for example, field experience, T.V. lessons, simulation/role plays) were used "not very often" or "never".

9.1.2.02 Textbooks and chalkboards remained the most frequently used materials in the designated classes, with 25 per cent and 23 per cent of respondents respectively reporting the use of textbooks and chalkboards "always" or "most of the time".

9.1.2.03 In general, between 50 and 60% of respondents reported spending between zero and one-third of their time upon activities which might be considered as individualisation of instruction. This absence of individualisation is quite crucial, as school staffs reported that for at least 25 per cent of students, materials and content are inappropriate in terms both of ability levels and student interests.

9.1.2.04 There [illegible] heavy involvement of teachers in the production of curriculum materials tailored to the needs of their students. Such time-consuming activities as the production of duplicated notes, tests of student progress and overhead transparencies were reported by significant numbers of respondents.

9.1.2.05 Teachers perceived spending most of their time upon the development of problem-solving and application skills, with relatively less time spent on memorisation and comprehension. Principals and department heads, however, perceived teachers as spending somewhat more time upon memorisation and comprehension.

9.1.2.06 Continued dominance of whole class lessons, textbooks, chalkboards and other didactic approaches reinforced the dismal state of curriculum implementation in the vast majority of Australian secondary schools. It is probably more than coincidence that student alienation levels are correspondingly high at this level of schooling. Greater involvement of parents and students in curriculum decision-making within the school (e.g. through the use of curriculum/learning contracts) may reduce didactic teaching and increase student motivation.

9.1.3 Evaluation of learning outcomes

9.1.3.01 In arriving at a student's overall grade, teachers reported using a variety of techniques for evaluating learning outcomes, including regular and term tests, assessment of attitudes, participation in discussion, laboratory performance and a heavier emphasis on assignments/projects.

9.1.3.02 Strategies for evaluating students additional to those listed in the CAP survey were reported as being used by a minority of teachers. These included practical work, bookwork, end-of-topic tests, skill performance, oral work and homework.

9.1.3.03 Little time was spent at meetings of staff in the discussion of evaluation of learning outcomes.

9.1.4 Other curriculum decisions reported

9.1.4.01 At least one third of teachers and departments heads reported changes in some aspect of the curriculum within their subject departments. In descending frequencies, these changes included new textbooks, new subjects, new materials, new elective choices, content rearrangement, new teaching methods, camping activities, evaluation of the total program, changed period duration, and a changed curriculum philosophy. These findings reflect substantial ongoing curriculum modification in Australian secondary schools.

9.1.4.02 Decisions within a school concerning the intended curriculum were found to comprise only one-fifth of all decisions observed, with the most frequent decisions relating to human relationships within the School. The most frequently observed decisions concerned teamwork/leadership style learning experiences, and administration/organisation (each approximately 10%).

9.1.5 Student perceptions of curriculum

9.1.5.01 Student perceptions of the curriculum which they experience differed from staff perceptions of the curriculum as planned.

9.1.5.02 Students represented a source of valuable supplementary insights concerning the experienced curriculum. Although more than 70% reported "liking" school, they expressed strong criticisms concerning what they were learning and how they were treated as persons.

9.2 Who participated in curriculum decision-making and how?

(c.f. Chapter V, p. 92)

9.2.1 Both teachers and principals perceived that teachers had a lot or some participation in curriculum decisions affecting the teachers' classrooms (e.g. content, sequencing, materials, teaching methods and student assessment). However, teachers reported little or no participation in decisions affecting matters which effectively control the total curriculum within the school, such as timetabling, teacher allocations, use of facilities and school rules. This implies a need for increased levels of teacher participation in decisions which in effect increase teacher control of curriculum implementation factors.

9.2.2 Teachers and principals both perceived that neither parents nor students participated to any extent in curriculum decision-making at the school level. These perceptions were supported by observational data obtained in the ethnographic study.

9.2.3 Subject department heads were perceived by all groups of respondents as the singly most powerful group of persons in curriculum decision-making. Case study data showed that the executive (i.e, principal and department heads) made more decisions than any other individual or group.

9.2.4 Individuals generally held self-perceptions of less authority than attributed to them by other groups. This accords with findings from U.S.A. (c.f. Schaffarzick et al, 1976) in relation to the "somebody else controls the ball-game" syndrome.

9.2.5 There were significant differences in perceptions concerning the relative authorities of Education Departments' external exam bodies. Perceptions of Head Office influences diminished in order from N.S.W., Queensland and W.A. (interestingly amongst the geographically largest states) to S.A., Victoria, Tasmania and the territories (c.f. Table 5.4, page 99).

9.2.6 External decision-makers were responsible for more observed curriculum decisions within a school than were the executive and/or staff.

9.2.7 The school principal was reported as the most usual convener of meetings to discuss curriculum.

9.2.8 Significantly more staff meetings were convened to discuss curriculum in Victoria, S.A., A.C.T. and N.T., than in other states.

9.2.9 Teacher perceptions of power as being held by a school executive proved to be inaccurate, in that the decisions were found to have been made elsewhere prior to the meetings at which the decisions were communicated.

9.2.10 The participatory and consultative approaches to curriculum decision-making were observed in our case study school to be more effective in terms of decision implementation, than were individualistic and authoritarian, unilateral and directive decisions.

9.2.11 Contrary to the philosophy of shared decision-making by a whole school staff or community implicit in SBCD, staff groups were observed to make only 10% of all recorded decisions.

9.2.12 In the ethnographic study, of those decisions for which the decision-making style was known, 69 per cent were made individualistically.

9.2.13 Although SBCD is widely proclaimed as being in practice in Australia, the CAP study indicated that SBCD is not in fact being implemented in the vast majority of Australian secondary schools.

9.3 What factors influenced curriculum decision-making?

9.3.1 External factors

9.3.1.01 Textbook availability, Education Department curriculum guidelines, external syllabuses, underlying subject structure and moderation examination systems were each perceived by more than half of all respondents as having a lot or some influence upon curriculum decision-making. Wide variations existed in the relative influences of these factors between the states and territories (see Table 6.2, page 159), but respondents in three of the largest states experienced greatest impact from some external factors.

9.3.1.02 The Curriculum Development Centre was perceived as having very little or no influence. Although this supports the non-centralist notions held for the functions of CDC, it also has implications for more active dissemination of CDC products.

9.3.1.03 Curriculum consultants both from the Education Departments and from tertiary institutions were perceived as having very little or no influence on curriculum decision-making. In view of the proclaimed need for consultancy support for school staffs in order to implement SBCD, the services of additional curriculum consultants should be more freely available to schools.

9.3.1.04 Respondents from small schools (i.e, less than 600 students) perceived that community resources exerted greater influence on decision-making in subject departments, than did respondents in other schools.

9.3.1.05 Regional curriculum planning groups were perceived by respondents from large schools (i.e, over 1000 students) to exert a greater influence on curriculum decision-making, than in other schools.

9.3.1.06 Government school respondents reported being more greatly influenced by Education Department memoranda and personnel, than were respondents from non-government schools. However, in the case study school, such perceptions were at variance with the observed reality within that school, as 4 per cent of the documented decisions were observed to be influenced by external factors.

9.3.2 Internal factors

9.3.2.01 Subject department heads were perceived by respondents in all states to be the most influential internal factor on subject department decisions about curriculum. Two-thirds of respondents perceived their influence as "a lot".

9.3.2.02 Other internal influences perceived as significantly great included: teaching skill and knowledge/attitude of teachers, teacher preparation time, class time available, individual teachers, school-prepared syllabuses and curriculum, and the timetable.

9.3.2.03 Factors perceived as having very little or no influence upon curriculum decision-making were students, the school librarian, inservice courses within the school, and the school counsellor. The need exists to review the influences of students, school-based inservice programs, the librarian, and the school counsellor.

9.3.2.04 Arising from the data concerning internal influences and participation in curriculum decision-making, it became evident that where the implementers of curriculum decisions were not the decision-makers, the actual curriculum did not accurately reflect the developers' intentions.

9.3.2.05 The school-prepared syllabus or curriculum was perceived as an important internal influence, but marked differences existed between the states (see page 164).

9.3.2.06 Major problems encountered in implementing the school curriculum were perceived to be lack of time for planning and lack of finance. Both these factors were perceived by more department heads to be a major problem, than by teachers and principals. Respondents perceived "lack of time for planning" as the most severe problem faced by the school. This needs to be viewed in light of the case study finding concerning time. The initial perception was that "someone else controlled time" through the timetable and staffing formula. However, the school staff discovered as a result of working with the CAP team that "we control time". Lack of communication was identified as the basic problem, rather than lack of time. The significant impact of time and interpersonal communication as factors in curriculum decision-making has not been adequately researched, nor has it been taken into account in planning support for SBCD.

9.3.2.07 Teachers and department heads use their own within-classroom judgements of student classwork and performance more frequently than other factors as influences upon curriculum planning for their classes.

9.3.2.08 Individual respondent's perceptions of school climate within the same school varied widely. This raises serious questions about the validity and reliability of much survey research. The reported findings often mask the extent of individual variation within schools in perceptions of school climate (see pages 176 - 177).

9.3.2.09 All respondent groups reported that their schools were friendly places where people were trusted and new members welcomed. Principals' responses were more positive than those of department heads and of teachers. The case study provided evidence, however, that many of the staff working within the one school had little communication with each other, and did not know each other's names even after a term in the same school.

9.3.2.10 A major constraint upon any implementation of SBCD was the impact of compartmentalisation within the school. This is the product of school organisation as subject departments, in which the curriculum is dis-integrated into discrete and non-communicating subject disciplines. Each of these subject areas created their own jealously-guarded territory and resources for which they competed aggressively. This competition related to resources, including time, staff, space, and funds.

9.3.2.11 Another major constraint upon effective implementation of curriculum was the timetable and the extent to which it was used by the timetablers as power to control the school, its staff, and the distribution of resources including time. Amongst the difficulties which the timetable exacerbated were lack of time for planning (even within a subject department), and the lack of communication both within and across departments. However, the case study school provided evidence that such problems could be diminished where deliberate efforts were made to re-integrate aspects of the curriculum, to set aside time to meet in a variety of planning groups, to form social groups, and via a number of other forms of communication.

9.3.2.12 The time taken in the development of a workable school timetable wasted for several months substantial staff resources as well as the effective use of student class-time, both in relation to the time of the time-tablers (usually experienced staff members) and in implementing the planned curriculum. There is a lack of adequate attention by State level administrators to solving this longstanding and very serious problem in Australian secondary schools. An intensive project backed by the application of current computer technology and short-term release of experienced time-tablers to work with knowledgeable programmers, could solve this major national problem.

9.3.2.13 The principal was observed to play the singly most crucial role in stimulating curriculum decision-making within the school. Current principals need support in developing the skills needed to facilitate SBCD and to work as team members with their staffs. Criteria for future appointments as senior staff for schools should include curriculum (including interpersonal and consultancy) competencies. Serious consideration must be given to extending the practice adopted in A.C.T. and S.A. of appointing a Deputy Principal/Curriculum who possesses the necessary competencies for the staff of each school. Consideration should also be given to providing opportunities

9.3.2.13 (cont.) for school principals to be transferred to areas of other responsibility without loss of status or to be granted early retirement opportunities.

9.3.2.14 In order to be effective in SBCD, teachers need to possess decision-making skills as group participants. Didactic experiences contribute little in this respect, and teacher education programs (both preservice and inservice) need to provide experiential learning in group processes and participatory decision-making.

9.3.2.15 Effective curriculum decision-making is enhanced by the following factors:

(a) Communication adequacy, both written and oral, and informal and formal, and both interpersonally and in a variety of groupings;

(b) cohesion, i.e, staff feeling they belong to and are an important part of a group, and perceiving a shared responsibility to the students, parents and colleagues in the school, as well as a willingness to work together as a supportive team towards the school's goals;

(c) resource availability, including sharing and optimal use of people and their skills, space, time, and materials.

9.3.2.16 The most valued aspects of school attendance were perceived by teachers, parents and students as meeting with other students, passing exams and job preparation. In the case study school, students reported changes in motivation from Year 7 to Year 10, with emphasis upon passing exams declining in importance and job preparation increasing in importance.

9.3.2.17 Human relationships within the staff (where this is viewed as a sub-system of the school's social system) were the most frequently-observed influence upon curriculum decision-making. Information reporting on the effectiveness of the implementation of curriculum exerted only half as much influence on decision-making as did human relationships. The improvement of human relationships was found to facilitate the use of data concerning the effectiveness of the curriculum,i.e., attention to curriculum evaluation processes increased as human relationships were improved.

9.3.2.18 Decision-making about curriculum cannot be divorced from the many other decisions about human relationships, resource usage, school organisational factors, and external contextual factors. The curriculum represents the heart of the school. The efficiency of the heart as a regenerative organ is inextricably interwoven with and interdependent upon the other circulatory and respiratory processes within the school.

9.4 Other findings concerning SBCD

9.4.01 Perceptions concerning the meanings of curriculum, curriculum autonomy and the ideal curriculum varied widely between all respondents throughout Australia, including wide variations within each individual school. Meaningful discussion concerning curriculum needs to be based upon agreement derived from negotiation between members of the school community resulting in shared perceptions about the meanings of the terminology of curriculum.

9.4.02 In order to match the wide differences in values held concerning curriculum by members of school staffs, alternative schools, sub-schools, and/or curricula should be developed with publicised statements of their curriculum philosophies, to enable informed choices between schools and/or curricula to be made by staff, parents and students.

9.4.03 To assist school staff members as well as other researchers, members of educational research teams should be encouraged to publicise descriptive accounts (case studies) of the processes in which they have engaged.

9.4.04 Communication between researchers and practitioners is facilitated (sic!) by jargon-free, concise and regular reports of what is being observed (see, for example, Capsules No 1-10). Such reports provide data to improve the quality of decisions and provide a model of information-gathering as a basis for improved decision-making.

9.4.05 The presence of independent external observers of curriculum decision-making in a school heightens the awareness of the members of the school staff about and sensitivity towards the school's curriculum and decision-making processes. Where the outsider models consultation and openness to forming, expressing and acting on ideas, the staff too develops these abilities, as if by osmosis.

9.4.06 Perceptions concerning aspects of curriculum decision-making need to be thoroughly checked between the participants involved as a means of achieving more effective decision-making. Such checks can be facilitated by the collection, dissemination and discussion of information, in both formal and informal ways, and in a variety of groupings in the school.

9.4.07 Both the processes and products of curriculum decision-making can be significantly improved where time is set aside for the whole school community to discuss and reflect together on their experiences.

9.4.08 When they were helped to create time, and given the opportunity, encouragement, and outside interest, the staff of a school discovered shared curriculum problems, and chose to work together to solve these problems. In fact, the staff reached the following "shared perception":

> A school staff can do whatever it wants to do when they
> - work together;
> - check perceptions;
> - involve the implementers in decision-making; and
> - take a holistic view of their school.

9.4.09 A visiting (one-day) subject matter consultant was found to provide the staff of a subject department with a recipe for an immediate curriculum change based upon a dependency relationship. The expert consultant failed to take the time needed to observe and to help the staff to identify and focus upon the "real" problems, and provided "somebody else's solutions to somebody else's problems". However, the CAP team in the roles of curriculum process consultants provided a liberating effect for the staff by enabling the staff to continue to identify and solve their own problems after the CAP team departed.

9.4.10 The time-consuming nature of curriculum decision-making, and research related to it, makes demands upon the people involved. However, the effort involved is rewarded by creating a holistic view of the school, its curriculum and community.

9.4.11 Where the decision-makers concerning curriculum are also the implementers, curriculum decision-making and implementation become both more effective and more satisfying to participants.

9.4.12 The effectiveness of curriculum research depends crucially upon the following features:

(a) emerging hypotheses;
(b) exploration of hunches;
(c) the identification of staff-perceived problems;
(d) constant checking of the comparative usefulness of following differing hunches and directions in data collection, as the basis for deciding upon research priorities;
(e) regular meetings between members of the research team, together with monitoring of the processes used in decision-making and research;
(f) sufficient time for analysis of and reflection about the meanings of the rich data collected in this way;

Curriculum research does not rely solely upon the use of many of the traditional experimental research strategies.

9.4.13 Substantial additional research is needed to illuminate curriculum decision-making processes and many aspects implicit in the CAP research model (see Figure 9.1).

9.4.14 The CAP research needs to be complemented by studies of curriculum decision-making undertaken within classrooms, both by teachers themselves and by others interested in the intended and the experienced curriculum and the relationships between these.

9.4.15 Data from CAP provided information concerning actual and perceived levels of participation in curriculum decision-making. There is a need for further research concerning the desired levels of participation of school staffs and communities in curriculum decision-making, and the relationships of these desired levels both to the actual levels and the levels of professional satisfaction and to school climate.

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